

New York:

THE WORLD'S CAPITAL CITY

Its Development and Contributions to Progress

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New York

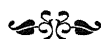
H A R P E R & B R O T H E R S

TO WILLIAM O'DWYER
Mayor of the City of New York

NEW YORK: THE WORLD'S CAPITAL CITY

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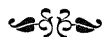
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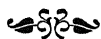
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Preface



MOMENTOUS events, swift-moving and illuminating, did more than the authors to shape this book. An account of New York's development, begun before Hiroshima, took on new meanings and reached a dramatic climax when the city became the World's Capital. In retrospect the experience was much like starting a narrative about one community and shifting, halfway, to another city—in a different world. In the light of rapidly changing conditions and new concepts of New York's role in the new scheme of things, constant and drastic revisions were necessary.

One effect was to provide a historic perspective and to focus attention upon many phases of the city's evolution which seem to have a significance hitherto unrecognized, especially by New Yorkers.

Writers of fiction declare that characters of their creation often seem to take matters into their own hands, playing fast and loose with preconceived plots and theses. Something of the kind happened in writing this story of an imperturbable city that refuses to explain its motives or methods, defying analyses or contradicting their conclusions. At any rate, the project was well advanced before an unexpected, insistent and dominant theme forced its way into the manuscript. Thereafter, the problem was how to deal with a mass of interesting but dissimilar material, seemingly unrelated to the basic thesis, which persistently demanded consideration.

A vast literature is concerned with New York. Few communities have more voluminous histories and the torrential flow of material is continuous but, like Niagara, it leaps into view momentarily only to plunge into a misty whirlpool. For half a century at least, New York has been making history faster than it could be recorded. A number of histories of old New York were written during the last decade of 1800. Many excellent historic works have since appeared, but most of them deal with special phases of the complex metropolis. So far as we

know there is no single volume that attempts to trace the more significant developments of Greater New York in their interrelationships.

It was to fill that distinct gap in the long and crowded library offerings that this book was projected. It was not conceived as a history, since many of the happenings are too recent to lend themselves to definitive treatment. Nor was it intended to attempt the impossible task of compressing within one volume the biography of this dynamic metropolis. The purpose was rather to link the multifarious present with the simple past and in a measure to bring the continuing story of New York up to date.

As has been said, the more recent events have given new directions to the work. They rang down the curtain on an old drama and forced consideration of the present in its relation to the future. The past fell into clearer perspective, and it was possible to attach new values to sequences going back to the city's beginnings. Patterns which had been obscured by the confusions of the modern metropolis began to appear in the town's old mosaics.

Reasoning by analogy—usually a dubious process where New York is concerned—led, in this instance, to a closer examination of the city's basic activities to see if they, too, might reveal unfolding patterns or formulas. This proved a rewarding experience, and, although the results are tentative and subject to more scientific examination, they suggest the existence of laws or principles that may be helpful in solving some of the universal problems of the new day, especially those relating to urban existence.

The extent to which New York has through self-discipline and collective action maintained order and attained approximate social stability and general well-being, without loss of essential freedoms, is the true measure of the city's greatness and of its contribution to the world at large. How this has come about constitutes the main thesis in this story of New York. It is beyond the powers of the authors to reduce the New York pattern of unfolding growth to a mathematical formula, or to put into words the laws and principles that seem to underlie the various steps and unfoldings. But the results are now known, and others can go on with the inquiry.

The process of unfolding shows up most clearly in the economic field, covering finance, business, and industry; but it is also apparent in government and education—even in philanthropy. Initial impulses spring from desires, needs, and ideas that are held in common or can be exploited, in the best meaning of the word. The first stage in the process is that of uncontrolled and almost spontaneous proliferation or expansion. When proliferation or expansion becomes excessive or unprofitable, controls, voluntary or otherwise, are introduced. With the establishment of effective controls worth-while activities may be further expanded. The final stage is integration with other activities in the larger organism and the expansion of the unified whole.

New York is the sum of innumerable activities giving rise to this dynamic process, along with many other influences which are still evolving, as well as the debris of those that have not followed these laws or principles. The method adds up to what is sometimes called the capitalistic system, but actually no real system is apparent. The United States and New York City are supposed to be products of this so-called "capitalistic" system. But the most notable thing about the American way of life, so far as economics is concerned, is the lack of system.

Our economic operations actually include a little of everything, ranging from private monopolies, "rugged individualism," free enterprise, co-operative companies, and government ownership and operation to share-cropping. New York's special function, during the years, seems to have been to create a certain amount of order and system, through organization and management, out of the chaos of uncontrolled enterprise and governmental efforts to manage the nation's economy. New York has helped to create a variegated and "mixed" system that works; but it is not capitalistic in the trite sense. It is a modern form of collectivism that can at least be explained without defending the older evils and excesses which are all too familiar.

If this account of New York's development seems too laudatory and does not fairly balance good and bad, the fault is not chargeable to a desire to add to the city's extensive "booster" literature. New York does not need more boosting. But there is a real need for better understanding of the city, especially on the part of New Yorkers. And if the emphasis is on the affirmative and constructive side, that, too, has its justification, since the more sordid and deplorable aspects of the metropolis are fully and continuously exposed and obvious to the casual eye.

Similarly, any lack of balance in recounting New York's part in colonial development, in the Revolution, or later seems justified by the tendency of most general histories to minimize New York's role in the creation and development of the nation. Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other ranking American cities have all played their part not only in creating the United States but also in developing New York. Greater New York is the product not only of all America but of all the nations as well. That is why it is truly a world city. Perhaps that is why it is now the World's Capital City.

The Authors

New York City
January 1, 1948

Acknowledgments

Although the sources of much of the material in this book are specifically indicated, and a carefully selected Bibliography is included, such references do not fully measure the indebtedness of the authors to those who have written about New York in the past. The more significant parts of New York's story have been told many times, and the historical data are voluminous. However, the source material is not readily available to general readers.

For this reason the authors have, in the main, drawn upon books that may be had in most libraries—books that should be more widely read by those interested in the various phases of the City's history. In many instances single annotations merely indicate books that amplify the subjects under discussion.

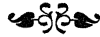
Everyone who writes of New York is indebted to I. N. Phelps-Stokes's "Iconography of Manhattan Island," published in six volumes in 1926; to "Valentine's Manuals," and to such histories as those of Martha J. R. N. Lamb and Mrs. Burton Harrison, published in 1896. For data concerning personalities of the past, the authors have drawn upon "The Dictionary of American Biography," a great history of the city and the country, told in terms of the figures who made that history. "New York Panorama," and "New York Guide," Federal Writers' Projects of the Works Progress Administration, are indispensable, not only as guides, but as compilations of material on the modern city not to be found elsewhere.

Otherwise, references are from among the 100,000 volumes, records and other material in the Municipal Reference Library, which is a veritable storehouse of vital information about the City. In a sense, a large part of this book is a correlation of many of these volumes and an invitation to their further perusal.

Of the many friends who have been of help, the authors are especially indebted to Mr. Robert W. G. Vail, Director, and Miss Dorothy C. Barck, Librarian, of the New-York Historical Society; to Romona Javitz, Superintendent of Picture Collection, New York Public Library; to Mr. Nicholas Vassilieve, of the Department of City Planning, for his cover and frontispiece; and to Mr. Richard C. Gutbridge for his lively end paper map.

Part One: » FROM A BENCH
ON BROOKLYN BRIDGE

Chapter One



A Challenge to Comprehension

A BENCH on Brooklyn Bridge is a good place to study the history not only of New York but of modern civilization as well, from the Age of Discovery to the era of atomic bombs and the United Nations. Like a treeless boulevard suspended from the sky, the span offers special advantages for observation and reflection and provides perspective without breaking contact with the city of which it is such an intimate part. It brings one closer than any street or building to the heart of the metropolis—the harbor.

Escaping from crowded concrete sidewalks, it is pleasant to feel the yielding board floor of the vibrating promenade, and a stroller may rest on a bench near the center, where the web of cables dips lowest to catch and hold the vaulting roadways. From this quiet spot one may get a better understanding of history and see where much of it was made.

At the same time glimpses are to be had of the future city, and earnestness of a new world order. New civic centers for Manhattan and Brooklyn are taking form, and other major improvements are in view. Brooklyn Bridge itself is being complemented by the Brooklyn-Battery vehicular tunnel. Almost the entire East Side is being rebuilt, and a sweeping glance carries from the tip of Manhattan, where Greater New York began, to the United Nations site, mankind's new starting place.

Brooklyn Bridge is a structure of rare grace and beauty. It symbolizes the unity and spirit of daring, as well as the explosive energies, that created New York City. No longer listed as the "Eighth Wonder of the World," it still typifies the great community's striving for orderly multiplicity. More than any other feature of the city, this first of the great bridges is a record of early upward and outward thrusts of the expansive forces that have since found expression in the skyscrapers, which form Manhattan's canyons, and in other spectacular features of today's metropolis.

We usually associate the activities that created New York with the industrial era, and we attribute her special genius and achievements to free enterprise, unrestrained competition, and the maximum opportunities they provided. But New York is an old city, older than the industrial age, and much of what can be seen from Brooklyn Bridge consists merely of modern manifestations of human aspirations and attributes stretching back to ancient times. Venturesome enterprise and intense rivalry between nations, groups, and individuals to secure monopolies and special advantages were not produced by the Industrial Revolution. It was the other way round.

New York is the product of several ages of a very old Europe, as well as of more modern indigenous forces. The Age of Discovery came long before machines, but it grew out of the competitive trade of medieval times. During its long existence the Hanseatic League engaged in virtually every known form of exploitation and monopoly.

Down at the Battery there is a statue of Giovanni da Verrazzano, who made the first recorded discovery of New York Bay in 1524. Verrazzano described his discovery in a letter to his patron, Francis I of France, written at Dieppe on July 8, 1524. The genuineness of this report was not fully established until 1909 by the finding of a codex in the possession of Count Giulio Macchi di Cellere. The original of this document is now in the Morgan Library, and the statue of Verrazzano, by Ettore Ximenes, a Roman sculptor, was erected by the Italians of New York in honor of their countryman.

They had previously honored Columbus, and they might, with like pride, pay tribute to Giovanni Caboto, better known as John Cabot, another native of Genoa, who was a keen competitor of Columbus in the great race that led to the discovery of the Western Hemisphere.¹ One may ask why Columbus and Cabot sailed under Spanish and English flags, and why the Florentine, Verrazzano, was in the service of the King of France, whereas the Englishman, Henry Hudson, was working for the Dutch. That Italian explorers contributed so much to the glory of countries other than their own seems significant.

The part played by the Turks in the discovery and settlement of the Western Hemisphere is not stressed in most histories. Yet Mohammed's followers probably had as much to do with initiating the Age of Discovery as the English in bringing on the industrial age. In ancient times peoples around the Mediterranean thought that nothing of importance lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules at Gibraltar. The eyes of imperialists and traders, as well as of religious zealots, were turned to the East, and the established trade routes to the Orient were overland. Economic interests, as well as religious zeal, motivated the Crusades

¹ Estaban Gomez, a Portuguese in the service of Charles V of Spain, voyaged along the coast in 1525. That so little attention was paid by France to Verrazzano's report may have been because of Cartier's discovery of the St. Lawrence in 1535.

against the Moslem infidels, but the Crusades were failures. When the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, overran the Balkans and almost obliterated Christendom, the eastern trade routes were effectively barred to Europeans. Thereafter speculation as to the size and shape of the earth took a practical turn and started the search for water routes to the East.

Columbus, who followed the family trade of weaving in Genoa, must have felt the effects of the Turkish barrier to trade with the East. So did John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto), who was of about the same age as Columbus. Cabot had visited Mecca, the great center of east-west trade, and wanted to bring goods to Europe by sea. He went to England, as Columbus had done before him, and interested the merchants of Bristol in his plans. The problem was to find someone to back the highly speculative enterprise. When news of Columbus's discovery reached England, Henry VII granted letters patent to Cabot and his sons to sail for their Bristol patrons. The King was to get a fifth of the net profits, and goods were to enter Bristol free of duty.

Cabot thought he had reached land of the Grand Khan at Cape Breton, and his patrons dreamed of establishing London "as a greater center of spices than Alexandria." Instead, Cabot might have discovered New York Bay if he had turned south, which would have given Englishmen a century's start in developing this part of the New World.

Portugal and Spain had already started their search for a water route around Africa. Diaz in 1487 and Da Gama in 1498 reached India by way of the Cape of Good Hope. As early as 1424 Béthencourt, a native of the French Netherlands, had pointed the way across the Atlantic by finding the Azores. Columbus's discoveries shifted interest from the long African route to India to the Atlantic, and all explorers thereafter followed the new directions. Magellan rounded Cape Horn in 1522.

Under the principles of international law as laid down in papal bulls, titles to the established routes to India belonged to Spain and Portugal.² That is why the other European nations had to bestir themselves to find another passage to the Spice Islands. Although the pace may seem slow today, the competition was keen and the search was carried on simultaneously with other conflicts between rival nations. That the Dutch had become the greatest trading nation of Europe was attributed by Sir Walter Raleigh to their extensive experience in herring fishing, and they too eagerly sought new trade routes.

The discovery of New York was an incident in this European rivalry and at first was considered of minor importance in the larger game of expanding empires. New land was of secondary importance to explorers who were looking for trade routes to the rich East. When they failed, their backers were disap-

² Ernest Ludlow Bogart, *Economic History of the United States* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1925).

pointed. Hudson, like Cabot a century before him, was looking for a passage through the frozen north and was forced by a mutinous crew to turn south. Acting on a tip he had received from Captain John Smith the year before, Hudson sailed up the coast from the Chesapeake and explored the Delaware (South) River and Bay before he entered New York Bay and the North River, which he penetrated as far as Albany in 1609.

Hudson was again frustrated in his search for a passage through the continent, but he had found a vast territory between Virginia and New England (where old maps had shown a narrow isthmus) which his Dutch patrons could claim and hold for several decades. The race to find a northwest passage had been intensified by the French, and Champlain had discovered the lake that bears his name several weeks before Hudson reached New York Bay. But the French, with their Algonquin allies, had attacked the Iroquois, and the Dutch decided to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered to trade in furs with the Indians, who had become hostile to the French.

The English had prior claims to the area, based on the discoveries of the Cabots, but they were not in a position to do much about them. They had destroyed the Spanish armada and were building up their sea power, but James I had troubles both at home and on the continent. More wars remained to be fought, and the other American colonies had to be firmly established before Charles II could oust the Dutch from New Netherland.

Conditions in Europe were more chaotic at that time than they are today. Christendom was breaking up. There was no unifying force. Old empires were crumbling and new ones were forming. But a new integrating factor also was emerging. Beneath the turmoil was the everlasting struggle for greater freedom—political, religious, and economic. There was no political or religious unity, but economic pressures were creating a new kind of unity based on international trade.

Paradoxically this new international force simultaneously intensified rivalries and new kinds of nationalism. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, when New York was discovered, international trade had a low rating among governmental policies. That trade with friendly nations might be more profitable than conquest and the plundering of conquered peoples was a concept of slow growth. Spain had conquered a large part of the Western Hemisphere and had looted the areas where gold was to be had, but the British at first found it easier to rob the Spaniards than to develop their own colonies. Such development was left to the Colonials themselves, who were to teach Europe that trade was highly profitable and that it could and should be a fair exchange. This was particularly true of the new Dutch trading post in New York.

There are more picturesque and exciting incidents in the history of other colonies than in that of New York. But if New York's story emphasizes trade,

with connotations of monopolies, cutthroat competition, and economic and financial exploitation, these characteristics may be traced back to the European nations before they learned that the New World was worth achieving and fighting for. New York was settled with the idea of fostering trade, which proved of great benefit to the settlers, to the Netherlands, and to England.

International trade and commerce received their greatest impetus from the discovery of the Americas, and New York was in time to become their center. The Dutch, however, always had more interest in the East Indies than in New Netherland, and they placed a higher value on their Delaware River settlement than on New Amsterdam, which at first was merely a way station on the fur-trade route to Albany. Batavia, in Java, was the prize bulb in their scattered tulip patch of settlements.

The Dutch, however, wanted to get as much as they could from the fertile land along the river and around New York Bay. Hendrick Christiaensen and Adriaen Block came to get furs in 1611-1614 and looked over the new land along the river and around the bay. What they saw convinced the Dutch that this was a good place in which to live as well as to visit and trade.

From Brooklyn Bridge one can see the places where the first settlements were made in lower Manhattan and in Brooklyn. Before buildings became higher than the bridge the entire area that was to become Greater New York could have been seen from the height of one of the Gothic arches of the bridge. There is as much water as land in sight and there is more movement visible in the harbor, but the size of the harbor and the depth of the waterways were more of a handicap than an advantage in the days of small sailing vessels. Nevertheless the waterways were the important unifying factor and provided a means of transportation that made a metropolis possible. They served the numerous settlements that sprang up on Manhattan, on Long Island, up the Hudson, and in New York State and Connecticut. The waterways gave New York the fastest and most comprehensive transit to be had at the time by any colony.

The first fort at the Battery was erected to serve all of New Netherland as the place where vessels got their clearances. New York thus began as the hub of a domain even more far-flung than it is today. The town that grew up around the fort was only one of many settlements in the bay area, but it followed the pattern of cape cities in other parts of the world—a fortified place with three sides facing the water. The palisades later erected at Wall Street were supposed to provide protection on the land side, but the fortifications were never strong enough to withstand a serious attack. Neither the Dutch, the British, nor the Continentals were able to defend the old city when it was threatened. After the Revolution, and particularly after 1812, the city had better defenses.

There are many famous waterways, passes, and highways in the world, but for three centuries no stretch of land or water has performed services comparable to this Gate to the North American continent. It is a main sluiceway of modern history, through which passed a large part of the people and the cargoes that made America. But the portals also swing outward. Through the Narrows in New York Harbor have flowed the goods that have paid for our imports and the interest and capital borrowed abroad to finance our development as a nation. More goods have gone out than have come in, but the main current of people has been inward; those who came in, from all lands, have made New York and the country. And in two world wars a large percentage of the men and munitions passed through the 2,000-foot channel between Bay Ridge and Staten Island. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the two world wars were won in New York Harbor.

The Hudson does not lead to India, but it leads farther inland than any other river on the Atlantic seaboard except the St. Lawrence, and it is not ice-bound in winter. This was perhaps the most important single factor in the subsequent development of New York. It opened up a veritable empire. The Empire State did not develop so rapidly as Virginia, where tobacco and other products flourished before the land was depleted, but in New York there were more breaks in the mountain barriers and in time it overcame handicaps similar to those in the Chesapeake area. New York early developed a more diversified trade. Her varied products could be exchanged for goods in demand up and down the coast and far inland. And the population was more polyglot. The enterprising English and the thrifty Dutch were dominant, but peoples from all lands found a welcome and opportunities in the region around the harbor.

People still walk Brooklyn Bridge for pleasure and exercise; artists, poets, and visitors find it stimulating, and sentimental antiquarians love it as a reminder of early days. Economists, financiers, politicians, and others may find it equally interesting for other reasons. Where on earth is there such a display of monuments to the age of *laissez faire* and that of the more modern forms of collectivism as well as of enterprises that are first in their several fields? Some of the gigantic structures in sight are monuments to personal egos and individual enterprise; others proclaim the possibilities of intelligently directed group action.

Brooklyn Bridge itself was such a group enterprise. Manhattan and Brooklyn were first bound together by lace-like cabling, because John A. Roebling, born in the walled town of Mühlhausen, Germany, had become fascinated by the so-called "miracle bridge" suspended by chains over the River Regnitz. Young Roebling came to America and was soon building bridges. He addressed a letter to Abram S. Hewitt, on June 19, 1857, proposing a suspension bridge

over the East River, and Hewitt inserted the letter in the *Journal of Commerce* to call attention to the project.

A quarter of a century passed before Brooklyn Bridge was completed and opened. The story of the attendant struggles, failures, and scandals epitomizes the evolution of the community's groping for unity. When it was finally completed, Brooklyn Bridge represented the merging of several sciences and marked tremendous advances in engineering and construction; it was more than a bridge—it was a sermon and a message.

John A. Roebling was not merely a great engineer. When he died, in 1869, as a result of an accident while surveying the location for the Brooklyn tower, he left a manuscript of several thousand pages entitled "Roebling's Theory of the Universe." And when his son, Colonel George Washington Roebling, became a victim of caisson disease, he kept a violin on his table and a telescope by the window, where the paralytic sat watching the stringing of the cables from his bedroom on Brooklyn Heights.

Abram S. Hewitt, in his memorable address dedicating the bridge, bade the city find answers to its problems in the splendid new structure, which he declared represented a triumph of two principles: the organization of expert knowledge, and the establishment of a fixed and centralized responsibility for results.³ New York could not ignore such tangible proof that bold concepts and scientific execution could be merged through collective efforts of a new kind.

Through an arch of the bridge one can see the Woolworth Building, across City Hall Park. Is it a coincidence that these two beautiful structures, one the first great bridge to be suspended from steel-wire cables and the other the first high skyscraper of steel construction, stand so close together? Was it mere chance that production of the atom bomb was organized and directed from the Woolworth Building and called the Manhattan District Project?

In the distant future some philosophic visitor from Persia may perch on a crumbling arch of Brooklyn Bridge and ponder, as he views the ruins of New York, how and why such a mass of stone and steel was ever put together. Here, he may reflect, more people once lived and worked and played than anywhere in the world. He may wonder, as many do today, why this particular area attracted and held such multitudes. By what magic were the efforts of these diverse millions fused to achieve such ends? Those questions have never been satisfactorily answered.

Doubtless more people know more about New York than is known about any other city on earth, yet it has elusive elements that are a constant challenge to comprehension. These mysteries seem to have a reality of their own and must be related to unseen powers shaping human destinies everywhere. We may know more about such phenomena as the metropolis when the social

³ Allan Nevins, *Abram S. Hewitt* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935).

sciences are brought into line with advances in other fields. Some day it may be disclosed that New York, with all its chaotic complexities, is as simple and orderly as an atom.

In an address inaugurating the Regional Plan of New York and Environs, on May 10, 1922, Elihu Root declared:

A city is a growth. It is not the result of political decree or control. You may draw all the lines you please between counties and states. A city is a growth responding to forces not at all political, quite disregarding political lines. It is a growth like that of a crystal responding to forces inherent in the atoms that make it up.

We are beginning to apprehend that all life operates on a plane of intelligence transcending known laws and reasoning processes. The discovery that atoms know exactly what they are doing, together with the knowledge of what they can be depended on to do under certain conditions, is the greatest achievement in physical science. In an attempt to explain atomic energy to laymen, the Lilienthal report said:

The forces which hold all nuclear particles together are attraction. When lighter nuclei combine to make heavier ones, and in particular when the lightest nucleus of all, that of hydrogen, is combined with another light nucleus, these attractive forces release energy.⁴

Is it fantastic to suggest that the laws of attraction, the energy generated by motion and concentration, and the chain reaction that follows atomic fission and produces illimitable force may have less violent counterparts in great concentrations of human activity? Henry Adams long ago proclaimed that "concentration, whether political or industrial, is energy." Certainly New York has incalculable drawing power. One can almost see the law of attraction at work; the stock-piling of human uranium—an amalgam of highly potential energies—is constantly being subjected to maximum pressures and bombarded by lighter nuclei.

The effects of New York's drawing power and the release of the resultant energies are felt throughout the world. We may never learn the deepest secrets of the city, though the story of its development fills more books than anyone has the time to read. But the task of comprehending the basic facts about New York is made easier if we can break out of the maze of traffic and surging crowds and sit on a bench on Brooklyn Bridge and reflect as we view the mind-stretching panorama.

⁴"A Report on the International Control of Atomic Energy," prepared under the supervision of the Social Science staff of the University of Chicago, Chicago, 1947.

Chapter Two



New York as a Provincial Capital

NEW YORK had a modest beginning, but it is unique among world cities in that it was the capital of a province larger than France and Germany combined when the community itself consisted of a mere handful of inhabitants living in a few huts. It remained a provincial capital for over a century and a half, yet as a seat of government it never attained the distinctions of some of the other colonial capitals.

When certain Dutch and English governors went in for pomp and ceremony, the town was not impressed. More often it was resentful of the governors sent from overseas, most of whom had an unhappy time. The province was never a bonanza for the Dutch or the English. The West India Company, chartered in 1621 for twenty-four years, lost money on the venture. By way of contrast, the London East India Company, chartered by Queen Elizabeth in 1600, ruled India until 1857 and was considered the gem of British crown colonies until agitation for independence led to the creation of the self-governing dominions of India and Pakistan in 1947.

The government of New Netherland seems to have been even more complicated than that of modern New York. Governors of the West India Company took oaths to their High Mightinesses as well as to the company. They had to please a lot of people while trying to show profits. The provincial government was not formally established until 1626, when Peter Minuit came over as the first Director General and consummated his famous \$24 deal with the Indians. By that time it was realized that Manhattan was a better location for the seat of government than Fort Orange, at Albany.

The first fort, built by Minuit, consisted of a blockhouse of red cedar and a counting house with stone vaults, surrounded by barricades and sodded works. Minuit got along well with the Indians and the settlers, but he clashed with

the powerful patroons up the Hudson, who wanted to share in the company's fur trade. As a result of this controversy Minuit was recalled in 1631.

Although Wouter Van Twiller, his successor, was supposed to uphold the interest of the company, he had married a niece of Van Rensselaer, the most powerful of the patroons, and became their champion. He was removed under charges in 1637. Meantime he had acquired a lot of property, including Governor's (Nut) Island and an estate in Manhattan, and had become a leading opponent of Governor Stuyvesant. However, Van Twiller reconstructed the fort, enlarged the enclosure to include a house for himself, built three wind-mills, a guard house, and barracks, and dug a well. He also built a brewery and a church, although he quarreled with Dominie Everardus Bogardus, Nieuw Amsterdam's first clergyman, who called Van Twiller "a child of the devil" and threatened him with "such a shake from the pulpit as would make him shudder."¹

This was mild censure compared with what the Dominie later had to say about William Kieft, who succeeded Van Twiller in 1637 and ruled the province for ten tempestuous years. Kieft, known as "William the Testy," made himself unpopular from the start by strengthening the company's monopoly of trade, initiating drastic police regulations, restricting the sale of liquor, imposing an excise on tobacco, and requiring passports for leaving Manhattan.

Kieft's most serious mistake, however, was in trying to exact tribute from the Indians, which led to uprisings. Having provoked Indian attacks, Kieft had to appeal to the settlers to support countermeasures. This was the real beginning of the movement for political freedom in the province. When Kieft sought to raise money for defenses, the settlers demanded representation in the government.

The patroon system, which virtually transplanted feudalism to New Netherland—with favored patroons as lords of their manorial estates—failed to attract settlers, and it was under Governor Kieft that a new charter was promulgated in 1640, effectively curbing the patroons and cutting down their holdings by half. It permitted grants to private individuals and corporations, and former privileges were extended to "all good inhabitants." Any settler could patent as much land as he could cultivate or pasture free of all charges for ten years; thereafter he was subject to a quit rent of one-tenth of the produce.

The company also abandoned its monopoly in New Netherland and permitted natives and nationals of friendly countries to trade, subject to a duty of 10 per cent on imports and 15 per cent on exports, provided they were carried in company ships; the prohibition on manufactures also was removed.

¹ Incidents in this brief summary are taken from Ellis H. Roberts, *New York, the Planting and the Growth of the Empire State* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1887), in the series *American Commonwealths*.

Under these more liberal terms New Netherland began to draw settlers from New England and Virginia as well as from Europe.

Governor Kieft bought additional land from the Indians to accommodate the new settlers. Starting across the East River, where the Long Island Indians were more friendly, he bought, by degrees, most of the land now in Brooklyn and Queens. Land also was acquired on Staten Island, in the Bronx, and in lower Westchester, so that by 1640 practically all of what is now Greater New York had come into possession of the Dutch and the farms and settlements were multiplied.

Thus, after three decades, the metropolis and the tiny settlement on Manhattan began to develop under the stimulus of freer trade and more liberal political and land policies. Always severely practical, the Dutch early began to make a pattern that was to be followed in developing Nieuw Amsterdam. That pattern has since been enlarged, but it has not changed greatly. After erecting their fort at the tip of the island, they dug a wide canal along what is now Broad Street, with roadways on either side.

Since there was more ice in the Hudson in the winter, shipping and related activities developed along the East (Salt) River above the Water Gate. This, in turn, stimulated the building of dwellings for workers, and business soon centered on that side of the island. There were several bridges over the canal, and at the largest of these the burghers and merchants foregathered to transact business. This was New York's first Exchange, near the present Stock Exchange. The first market was also along the canal. Later, Wall Street became the northern boundary, and for two centuries the main activities of the community were confined to this small area, where so many vital affairs of the city are still conducted.

As trade increased, Governor Kieft tired of entertaining at the Fort and built a five-story stone structure on the waterfront facing the East River for use as a tavern. This building, which became the first City Hall, or Stadt Huys, stood on low ground at 71-73 Pearl Street, and the tides reached almost to the stone steps. Sybout Claesen, who lived near by, placed sheet piling in front of his house, but the rest of the shore line lacked such protection and thus made his efforts futile. Claesen's complaints led to the first improvements of the waterfront. The shore from the foot of Broad Street to the Stadt Huys was planked up and filled in. The dry walk thus provided along the lower East Side became Pearl Street, so-called because of the pearly oyster shells left by the tides.

Pearl Street, long the principal thoroughfare of the old town, still causes confusion. With its seemingly senseless twists and turns, it almost circles lower Manhattan; but it merely follows the old waterfront, turning west to skirt the former marshland and Collect Pond on the north. As land became more valuable, the canal was filled in to form Broad Street, and the shore front pushed

out to create Water, Front, and later South streets, where so much maritime and mercantile history centered before the advent of steamships made it practical to use the North River frontage.

The winding course of Pearl Street can easily be seen from Brooklyn Bridge. Most of the skyscrapers in this part of the city are inside the Pearl Street loop for the reason that the filled-in land beyond makes foundations for large buildings difficult and expensive. As the principal thoroughfare of the city over long period, Pearl Street is closely interwoven into New York and American history. George Washington lived on the street; so did Captain Kidd. Willem Bradford in 1693, started the city's first printing press at No. 81, a block from the site of the first City Hall, with its gallows and whipping post.

Peter Stuyvesant, who lost a leg in an attack on the Portuguese island of St. Martin, winning "praise for courage and censure for misjudgment," had seen military help to Nieuw Amsterdam during the Indian troubles and there was well received when he succeeded Kieft in 1647. He turned out to be the most autocratic of governors, yet he possessed some exceptional qualities. He stomps through many chapters in New York's early history.

Governing New Netherland was becoming more vexatious all the time. Rebellious burghers, "dangerous heretics," hostile Indians, and the English caused Stuyvesant endless worries. He was not successful in dealing with any of these difficulties and finally lost Nieuw Amsterdam to the British, but he left his stamp on the town, where he returned to live and die under the flag of his former enemies.

Stuyvesant built the city's first dock, at the foot of Moore Street; he extended the settlement's boundaries, creating New Harlem, and then restricted the city to the palisades erected at Wall Street as a defense against the English. Fort Amsterdam was of little military use, and all the Dutch governors complained that they found it in deplorable condition. Hogs played havoc with the earthworks, and one of the houses was burned when a spark from a gun, fired as a salute to the Director General, landed on the roof. Only when danger threatened, either from the Indians or from the English, was there any concern over the defenses.

The English always regarded the Dutch as intruders in America, and, though the Treaty of Hartford set boundaries reducing the Dutch hold on the English were not satisfied. The English towns on Long Island were especially hostile to Dutch rule. The climax came on March 12, 1664, when Charles II gave Long Island and New York to his brother, the Duke of York, and four men-of-war, with 450 men, under Colonel Richard Nicolls, took possession.

The Dutch wanted protection against savages and "the malignant English" but they wanted the States-General or the West India Company to pay the

costs of defense. Stuyvesant's reply was that the company had spent 1,200,000 guilders more on the province than it had received. There was never any question of Stuyvesant's courage. When the English ships anchored off Coney Island and Colonel Nicolls demanded the surrender of Manhattan, Stuyvesant manned the fort prepared to fight. When, however, Nicolls promised to hold Manhattan subject to negotiations between the home governments and to grant equal privileges to Dutch and English, the burghers compelled Stuyvesant to capitulate.

As a wedge between New England and Virginia and a potential gateway to the continent, New Netherland was of great strategic importance. But the Dutch were more concerned over the Far East and in a sense gave up New York for Indonesia, as they swapped New Jersey for Surinam in South America. At the time such choices may have seemed wise. New Netherland was more a liability than anything else to the Dutch, and it was to be even more of a responsibility to the rapidly expanding British Empire.

Governor Nicolls and his successor, Lovelace, tried to conciliate the Dutch, but the entire province, which had only 12,000 white inhabitants, was further impoverished by the disruption of the trade with Holland. Little was done to improve matters until Major Edmund Andros came over, following the second surrender of the Dutch in 1674. Governor Andros was aggressive and injected new life into the province before he, in turn, got into trouble. He had difficulty in collecting the new duties imposed on imports; he faced growing discontent among the colonists, and the Indian wars continued. Strained relations also developed between New York and other colonies over boundaries and jurisdiction.

Andros refused to permit New Jersey, which had been given by the Duke of York to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret, to open a port. Disputes over jurisdiction were brought to a head when Andros sent soldiers to Elizabethtown and arrested Sir George in his home. Andros sat as judge, but the jury freed Carteret. Later, in London, Lady Carteret complained to the Duke over the arrest of her son, and after an inquiry Andros was recalled to answer charges.

Andros cleared himself, was knighted, and returned to America in 1686 as Governor in Chief and Captain General of the northern colonies, which, including New York, had been consolidated under the title of the Dominion of New England. No seat of government was designated, and Andros spent much of his time in Boston, where he was imprisoned, along with fifty of his followers, after the revolt of 1689.

There was even more excitement in New York during this period, when the city was a sub-capital ruled by a Lieutenant Governor, and the populace had a revolt of its own; but this was only a part of the century-long struggle that ensued before the Revolution. New York had thirty-three governors or act-

ing governors during this hundred-year span, few of whom distinguished themselves as colonial administrators. That is probably one reason why there was a Revolution.

The governors were mere creatures of the home government, and their policies were made for them in London. Few of them added to New York's dignity as a provincial capital. By 1776 the little settlement was an old and fairly prosperous community of some 20,000. If it lacked the social elegancies of Williamsburg, Boston, and Philadelphia, it had not neglected everything else in its pursuit of trade and business.

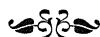
King's College was nearly a quarter of a century old, and its graduates were beginning to take part in the affairs of the city and the province. In one way or another wealth was accumulating and an indigenous culture was developing. New York was the most cosmopolitan and the most democratic of colonial towns and was fast becoming the most enterprising.

Much of the provincial city was destroyed by the great fire of 1776, during the British occupation, and lesser conflagrations swept the area during the next century, especially in 1835 and 1845. A few pre-Revolutionary landmarks, such as St. Paul's Chapel and Fraunces' Tavern, have been preserved or restored, and numerous plaques and other markers² recall historic events and structures of the earlier periods. Among these mementos, usually attached to skyscrapers, however, one may search in vain for clues to the amazing city that sprang from those humble beginnings.

The harbor is more revealing. The old warehouses beneath the splendid new promenade around Brooklyn Heights provide one key to the emergence of the quaint old provincial capital as a great city and the World Capital.

² Albert Ulmann, *Landmark History of New York* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1939).

Chapter Three



Pioneering in Greater New York

INCREDBLE as it may seem to modern Manhattanites, some people have preferred to live in Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx, and even Staten Island ever since there was a choice. The low, swampy ground in lower Manhattan caused certain West India Company officials to move over to Brooklyn Heights, still a unique residential area enhanced by recent improvements.

William Bennet and Jacques Bentyn bought from the Indians 930 acres in 1636¹ and started Brooklyn's first white settlement at Gowanus, named for a Mohawk who planted corn around the bay. Some three hundred Mohawk Indians were still living in the neighborhood in 1948. The second settlement was on Wallabout Bay, now surrounded by the Navy Yard, where Joris Jansen de Rapelje obtained a grant of three hundred acres the next year. Both settlements were absorbed by the Village of Brooklyn (or Breukelen) authorized by Governor Kieft in 1646.

This was the tiny beginning of the long process of political consolidation in the metropolitan district. It was made possible by the ferry, which established regular service to Peck Slip, Manhattan, in 1640. The village of Brooklyn covered the downtown area now being redeveloped around the new Civic Center. Ferry Road—later Fulton Street—made an easy curving climb from the water's edge to higher ground, where it forked at the first Dutch church to provide roads leading eastward toward Bushwick and south toward Flatbush, Flatlands, New Utrecht, and Gravesend, the five towns that later formed the enlarged Brooklyn.

Formerly an Indian trail, Ferry Road was laid out, four rods wide, in 1704, and the easterly branch became part of the first post road through Long Island. The other branch, to Fort Hamilton, later became the Royal Mail route between New York and Williamsburg, Virginia, via Staten Island. The Belt Parkway,

¹ Henry R. Stiles, *History of The City of Brooklyn* (Brooklyn, 1867-70), 3 vols.

Shore Drive, and the proposed Narrows crossing thus follow the earliest travel routes in the region.

The old town of New Utrecht, where Fort Hamilton is located and the new Veterans Hospital is being built, is historic as a battle post in the outer defenses of New York harbor. It was here that the British landed from Staten Island to begin the Battle of Long Island. Old Fort Lafayette, as well as Fort Hamilton and Fort Wadsworth across the Narrows, later guarded the main entrance to New York from the sea and were supposed to be impregnable in the pre-atomic era.

Gravesend is the only one of the old towns to be settled by the English or by a woman. She was Lady Deborah Moody, whose father, named Dunch, was a member of Parliament in Elizabethan times. Sir Henry Moody, who was made a Baronet by King James in 1622, died some ten years later. Left with a young son, Lady Deborah closed her country place and moved to London. Later she was brought into conflict with the government by remaining away from her country estate longer than was then permitted.

Lady Deborah considered the decree against her unjust and, being a strong believer in personal liberty, decided to come to America. Arriving in Massachusetts in 1640, she bought a farm near Lynn and joined the Salem Church. It was not long, however, before she found herself at odds with the elders. In his journal, Governor Winthrop characterized "Ladye Moodye" as "a wise, an anciently religious woman," who "being taken with the error of denying baptism to infants removed to the Dutch against the advice of her friends."

In Nieuw Amsterdam Lady Deborah found Nicholas Stillwell and some other English people who had come to America to find religious freedom. Together they established the settlement of Gravesend, where Lady Deborah was the leading spirit for sixteen years. She established her reputation as a fighter during the general Indian outbreak of 1643, when with forty supporters she beat off the savage attacks on Gravesend.

Lady Deborah was a town planner of ability. A sixteen-acre plot surrounded by palisades constituted the center of the community, in which the thirty-nine original settlers received an equal share. A town hall, church, school, and cemetery were inside the inclosure. Beyond were farms, spread out like an open fan. Attendance at town meetings, where important decisions were made, were compulsory, but otherwise it was a democratic, or socialistic, community. Two years before she died, in 1659, the first Quaker meeting in America was held in Lady Deborah's house. She planned a town to rival Nieuw Amsterdam, but it was to be more pious. Instead, the world's greatest popular playground developed there, when Shell Road opened the way to Coney Island.²

² Oliver Pilot and Jo. Ranson, *Sodom by the Sea*, (Garden City, N. Y.: Garden City Publishing Co. Inc., 1943).

The most famous people of a later day led the crowds to the seashore. The Coney Island House registered such celebrities as Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, P. T. Barnum and Jenny Lind, several governors—and Walt Whitman. By 1844 as many as three hundred carriages were paying tolls on the Shell Road on Sundays. One of the discoverers of Coney Island was Mike Norton, a member of the Tweed Ring, who made Norton's Point a summer annex to his gambling joint on Bleecker Street in New York. Tweed hid at Norton and Murray's Inn after escaping from his guards and used a small boat to reach the schooner "Walter Atwood," which took him to Spain.

Meantime Gravesend had acquired a political overlord in John Y. McKane, who attained national fame before he went to jail by throwing his normally Democratic district to Harrison in 1888; this was a factor in the loss of New York and the Presidency by Cleveland. Such exploits, however, paled after the district produced such big-shot gangsters as Frankie Yale and Al Capone, who organized the criminal gangs that overran Coney for a long period.

The more respectable element began to shun the West End after Austin Corbin developed Manhattan Beach and built his New York and Manhattan Beach Railroad, which he later used to get control of the bankrupt Long Island Rail Road and the Philadelphia & Reading. Horse cars reached Coney from Brooklyn during the Civil War, and iron steamboats brought pleasure seekers from New York; but Andrew R. Culver improved on Gunther's Dummy Road by building his Prospect Park & Coney Island Railroad, with its terminal at Culver Plaza. Brighton Beach, West Brighton, and Sheepshead Bay, with three race tracks, prize fights, the fireworks displays at Manhattan Beach, and band concerts, in addition to the more numerous attractions of Coney, made the entire area a playground, although the resident population of Gravesend had not increased more than five hundred in a century.

The era of more popular amusements was inaugurated by George C. Tilyou, a real estate promotor, who opened Steeplechase Park in the gay nineties. Luna Park dates from 1902; Dreamland was a spectacular rival until it was destroyed by fire and the land acquired by the city in 1912. The new Oceanarium, replacing the old Aquarium in Battery Park, is on part of this site. In 1920 subway extensions brought Coney within the five-cent fare zone and opened it to millions of people. The Boardwalk, discussed for years, became a reality in 1923. Pioneering in another field took place when the Vitagraph Studios were located in the area and the motion picture industry was launched, with John Bunny, Anita Stewart, and other early film stars appearing in pictures for which the beaches and other local features provided settings.

Flatbush and Flatlands, today parts of what James Huneker, who lived there, once called the "Continent of Brooklyn," were of slower growth than some other sections of Greater New York. The old towns were small centers in farm

country and only became residential areas for urbanites when transit improved. Most of the excitement occasioned in Flatbush since the Battle of Long Island has been caused by the do-or-die efforts of the Dodgers at Ebbets Field and the reactions of the local fans to their efforts.

Most of Flatlands looks out on Jamaica Bay, the most spacious outdoor area of the modern city. With the Rockaways across the Bay, the Belt Parkway, and the Floyd Bennett and Idlewild airports not far away, this part of Brooklyn in a few years took on a new character and greater significance as a residential and recreational area, closely linked by parkways, rapid transit, and aircraft to the city, the region, and the world.

Meantime Brooklyn, with upwards of three million residents, had become the most populous part of Greater New York. The old cities of Brooklyn and Williamsburg and the town of Bushwick were consolidated in 1854. Included in this combination were Greenpoint, made famous as the "Garden Spot of the World" by Pete McGuinness, its local political boss, and all the East River waterfront from Wallabout Bay to Newtown Creek. New Lots was annexed to Brooklyn in 1866. Flatbush, New Utrecht, and Gravesend became part of the city in 1894 and Flatlands in 1896. This completed the consolidation of the City of Brooklyn, begun when Gowanus and Wallabout became parts of the Village in 1636.

The consolidation of Kings County into a city was a drawing together rather than an expansion, but when Brooklyn first applied to the Legislature for a city charter New York's representatives opposed the move on the ground that annexation to New York was its "manifest destiny" and that the separate charter would retard the inevitable merger. Brooklyn got her charter in 1834, despite continued opposition, but the consolidation of Greater New York was delayed for over sixty years.

Maspeth, Newtown, Flushing, Whitestone, and some of the other communities in Queens were settled during Governor Kieft's regime. Like most of Kings County, this large area was mostly farms until after the consolidation of the city. The pioneers had to fight Indians and face hardships comparable to those later overcome by the western migrants.

Flushing Meadow, the temporary home of the United Nations, is near the geographical and population center of Greater New York. People still living remember when the wide tidal marsh covered with salt hay was surrounded by farms that separated the old settlements and when men made a living trapping fur-bearing animals around the meadow and the Corona refuse dump. Queens, which formerly reached to the Suffolk line, was divided between the Dutch and English.

Making money was the earliest Long Island industry. Wampum made of Long Island shells was used by the eastern tribes of Indians and was legal

currency until the white man learned to counterfeit it by processing the shells by machinery. The Indians also conducted a thriving business around Little Neck Bay and along the East River by selling dried fish and clams. One of the first fulling mills in colonial New York was established in 1691 at Fish's Point, near the present site of LaGuardia Field. As early as 1654 tobacco was grown and cured in Flushing for export.

The area that is now The Bronx was purchased from the Indians by the Dutch West India Company in 1639. The first white settler in the region, Jonas Bronck, whose name it still carries, bought 500 acres between the Harlem and Bronx rivers in 1641. Colonists from New England, including religious dissenters, who emigrated into this section found living difficult, because they were not welcomed by the Indians. In 1643 John Throgmorton settled what later became Throgs Neck; Anne Hutchinson, the exile from Massachusetts, made her home in 1643 on the river named for her.

Mrs. Anne Hutchinson had migrated to Boston from England in 1634, and soon her peculiar religious notions and outspoken criticisms rendered her so obnoxious to the authorities that she was banished from Massachusetts shortly after Roger Williams at Salem had suffered a like fate. Anne joined with Williams in Rhode Island and founded Portsmouth and Newport. But even Rhode Island did not satisfy her long, and she migrated with her husband and family to the Dutch colony of New Netherland and settled in 1643 in The Bronx, on Pelham Neck. She was undoubtedly a woman of courage and conviction. In the Indian war which broke out again after the signing of the treaty at Bronck's house, the savages descended upon Anne Hutchinson's farm and wiped it out of existence, killing her and all her family and servants.³

In 1654 Thomas Pell bought a large tract of land, part of which is now Pelham Bay Park. The Morris brothers, merchants from Barbados, purchased The Bronck estate in 1670 and gave their name to Morrisania. Their descendants included Lewis Morris, signer of the Declaration of Independence; Gouverneur Morris; and Newbold Morris, president of the City Council in the LaGuardia administration and candidate for mayor in 1945.

Politically The Bronx was a part of Westchester County until 1874, when the western townships of Kingsbridge, West Farms, and Morrisania became wards of the city, and these were followed in 1895 by the eastern townships of Westchester and part of Pelham and Eastchester. The two annexations from Westchester County became the borough of The Bronx in 1898. It was not constituted a separate county of The Bronx until 1914.

Until after the consolidation of Greater New York, The Bronx was primarily

³ Stephen Jenkins, *The Story of The Bronx*; from the Purchase Made by the Dutch from the Indians in 1639 to the Present Day (New York; G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912).

farm country, with occasional estates built by wealthy New Yorkers. In 1790 the inhabitants numbered 1,761 and by 1850 had only increased to 8,032. Irish immigrants had already begun to move in at this time, when the Harlem Rail Road and the Hudson River Railroad began building and the Croton aqueduct was under construction. Industries were then located along the Harlem and East River fronts, and the population was tripled in a single decade.

Verrazzano discovered Staten Island and Henry Hudson named it, but early attempts to settle the area proved unsuccessful. In 1630 the West India Company granted land to Michael Pauw as part of the patroonship of Pavonia, but Pauw failed to establish a settlement and it later went to David Pietersen De Vries and Cornelis Melyn. De Vries established Oude Dorp (Old Town) near South Beach in 1641, but it was destroyed by Indians. A company of Waldenses were more successful with their settlement, made at Stony Brook in 1648.

Geographically Staten Island is more closely linked with New Jersey than with New York, and the political status of both resulted from a whim of the Duke of York, who gave New Jersey to Carteret and Berkeley in 1664. Staten Island was included in this grant. However, Governor Andros ruled that all the islands in the bay that could be circumnavigated in twenty-four hours should go to New York. Captain Christopher Billopp succeeded in sailing around Staten Island within the time set. As a reward he was granted 1,163 acres in South End, which became the manor of Bentley. The old manor house, still standing, played an important role in the Revolution.

Billopp, whose original name was Farmer, married the daughter of Captain Christopher Billopp of the British Navy, who had secured a patent to a large tract of land on Staten Island. Farmer took his wife's name when she inherited this property. Billopp commanded a corps of loyalist militia during the Revolution, but he was taken prisoner and his house was later confiscated. After the Revolution he went to Nova Scotia and served as a member of the New Brunswick Assembly and Provincial Council.

Staten Island has always been a land bridge between New England and New York and the South. Before the days of great bridges and tunnels and of automobiles and good roads, a considerable saving in time could be made by using Staten Island in traveling north and south. The Royal Mail route from New York to Williamsburg, Virginia, ran from the Brooklyn Ferry slip through Brooklyn and across Staten Island to Perth Amboy. Lord Howe straddled this route when he mobilized his troops on Staten Island for his attack on New York, thus definitely cutting this important connection between the colonies.

After the Battle of Long Island Howe made a bid for a settlement and asked for a conference with representatives of the Continental Congress. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge were named, and the meeting was held on September 11, 1776, at the Billopp house, where Howe had established

his headquarters. The Howes, as commanders of the British military and naval forces, were authorized to grant assurance of peace and pardon to the Continentals and to promise repeal of the acts which the latter considered obnoxious, provided the Colonies submit and some way could be found by Parliament to secure imperial revenue from the Colonies for purposes of defense. These terms were rejected, and the British held Staten Island until the close of the Revolution. Conference House has been preserved as a historic shrine.

In the War of 1812 Fort Richmond was built at the Narrows, with Fort Tompkins in the rear. The Federal government bought these forts in 1847 and built Fort Wadsworth and the present Fort Tompkins. In the two world wars Staten Island was an important point of embarkation, and enormous quantities of goods were handled there. The freight terminal of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad is located on Staten Island, and under Mayor Hylan modern piers were erected, where the first American free port was later established. These facilities were extensively used by the government during the Second World War, as were the hospitals that received wounded almost directly from ships. Staten Island's new ferry house, to replace the old St. George ferry house that burned in 1946, will connect with a system of parkways leading to the Outerbridge Crossing and the Bayonne Bridge. Those two spans, with the Goethals Bridge, were built by the Port of New York Authority as important parts of the regional highway system.

Much of Staten Island's early history is more directly connected with New Jersey than with New York. Elizabeth, Perth Amboy, New Brunswick, Paterson, and Newark were important ports before the days of railroads. Staten Islanders have had many grievances. When the Federal government established its quarantine stations on Swinburne and Hoffman Islands in 1859 it created hostility leading to riots and the burning of the town, for which the state collected \$100,000 from the Federal treasury. In recent years the practice of dumping city garbage to fill marsh land on the island has aroused bitter opposition and, in 1947, brought threats of secession from Greater New York.

Pioneering in the area now included in Greater New York and the larger metropolitan district lacks some of the features associated with the epic movements that later carried settlers beyond the mountains and across the prairies, but it was no less significant. In its way it was comparable to beach-head operations in the Second World War, when the primary objective was to land and secure a foothold. The early settlers in New York, both Dutch and English, constituted a task force with a unique mission. They were on their own. All that was provided for them was opportunity. They were not consciously engaged in founding a nation or conquering a continent. Their single objective, in the beginning, was to survive, and this meant getting a living from the land.

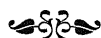
New York's history is that of a small trading post which became a great

seaport, but this evolution took a long time. Like other pioneers, the people had to sustain themselves before they had anything to sell. Their first trading was with the Indians and with each other. That was the basis of their local economy, and it was their chief concern.

New York has never been self-sufficient, and it could not have developed as an isolated community. The trading that went on between the settlers around the harbor and with other settlements was of primary importance. Manhattan became the center of these trading activities, but its relation to the larger area was that of a county seat in an agricultural section. As a market place it depended for its existence on the productivity of the contributing area.

In time New York became the chief market for the country, but the farms in the section gave the town its start and sustained it over a long period. Otherwise New York would have declined with the passing of the fur trade. When the farms began producing surpluses beyond the needs of the settlers the initial battle of the pioneers was won. The beach head had been made secure. Succeeding armies of pioneers could land with confidence, deploy, and press forward in the conquest of the continent.

Chapter Four



When Trading Became Commerce

HOW New Yorkers make a living is something of a mystery to the world at large. They produce little, and large numbers of them seem to spend their time handling carbon copies of documents they never see. To prevent the accumulation of paper from choking the downtown area, it is torn to scraps and thrown from skyscraper windows when there is a parade up Broadway.

Today the words "trade" and "commerce" are used almost synonymously, but in the dictionary of political economy there is, or was, a significant difference. One of the old meanings of "trade" was "trail" or "path." Later the word was applied more definitely to special activities and industries and to internal mercantile intercourse. The term "commerce," on the other hand, came to be regarded as covering national and international dealings.

Developments centering in Manhattan marked the transformation of the cruder practice of barter and the exchange of goods into provincial, national, and international trade or commerce. The Wall Street district has seen and been an important part of the evolutionary process by which mercantilism replaced the Hanseatic League traders only to give way to *laissez faire*. In more recent times New York has evolved new financial mechanisms and is the center of a complex economic system possessing the characteristics of mercantilism, *laissez faire*, and collectivism, along with other features that defy analysis.

It was here, more than anywhere else in the world, that the evils of the mercantile system became apparent and led to a revolt long before Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. And here, at different periods, some of the alternatives to mercantilism were practiced, with the result that trade and commerce expanded beyond all previous conceptions and became profitable to more people. New York has been the touchstone and testing block for practically every theory and practice relating to trade and commerce since the Age of

Discovery led to the development of commercial intercourse between nations.

When the Dutch came to New York to barter trinkets for furs collected by the Indians, they were following an old practice. They were still adhering to traditional methods when settlements multiplied and began trading with each other. But the economic history of New Netherland diverges from that of other colonies in America. "Colony" is an old word meaning "plantation." Colonies were overseas plantations to be exploited by the home country as part of the national economic system.

Nieuw Amsterdam was not a crown colony in this sense. Holland was a republic during the entire period of the Dutch control of New Netherland, and it was the greatest trading nation. The Dutch did not become leaders in the expanding new economy, based on commerce, by excessive greed or the use of naked force. Their success as traders was attributed to methods that were more enlightened than those of their competitors. Their operations were better organized and administered over a long period.

Exploration leading to the discovery of the New World was motivated by the desire to find new trade routes to the Orient. When it was found that two continents, as well as the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans, lay between Europe and Cathay, the primary purpose of the early explorations disappeared. The route to the Far East around Africa was shorter.

When Columbus carried back gold to Spain, however, he created a new motive for further expeditions. Spain and Portugal explored a large part of the Western Hemisphere in their search for gold. They found enough of the precious metal to justify their ventures and to stimulate other nations to join in the search. Sir Walter Raleigh and others were stirred by the prospect of finding the famed Eldorado. Gold had assumed a new importance in Europe, where the old feudal economy, based on dealings in kind, was giving way to a "money economy."

One effect of the increase in gold brought about by Spanish and Portuguese conquests in America was to cheapen the metal and to stimulate trading. Competition was intensified, and nations sought special advantages in the form of monopolies. This brought on more wars, but the causes of wars and their aims had changed considerably.

Mercantilism coincided with and motivated the creation of larger political units with more powerful, and more expensive, governments. Industry and commerce, which gradually became more important than agriculture, were encouraged in order to increase revenues for monarchs and their favorites. The whole concept was based on monopolies and special privileges, and under the system nations sought to sell as much as possible and to buy as little as possible from other nations. In modern terms, they were extreme isolationists and nationalists, engaged in intense international rivalry.

Ever since Adam Smith's day the evils of mercantilism have been decried, but even he admitted toward the end that the system was effective. It may more fairly be compared with what preceded it rather than with what followed. The New World was discovered and opened to settlement; navigation and communications were improved; more people were brought together in cities and found profitable work. Masters, as well as slaves, were freed from the bondage of the outmoded feudal system.

The Dutch did not come to New York, after Hudson's first visit, to renew the search for a route to India, as the French continued to do by following the St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes, and they were not looking for Eldorado. The Dutch returned to trade with the friendly Iroquois Indians, and never for a moment did they forget that they were traders. The West India Company had a trade monopoly, but the Dutch early learned that New Netherland could not be a success unless they adopted a more liberal policy.

An important forward step in removing trade barriers was taken in 1640, when the New Netherland monopoly was abandoned and natives and nationals of friendly countries were permitted to engage in trade. Before long, multilateral trade, or commerce, with friendly nations became common in New York, which thus had an opportunity to develop trade under more favorable conditions than prevailed in the other colonies. It was a mutually profitable business and foreshadowed a new era with a new economy. During the Great Rebellion in England the Dutch virtually monopolized trade in the Colonies and in the West Indies. Cromwell's Navigation Ordinance of 1651, giving English vessels a monopoly in trade with England, was aimed at the Dutch. One effect was to stimulate colonial shipbuilding and to build up trade with the West Indies. This trade was expanded after 1660, when the British restricted the importation of foodstuffs to protect English agriculture.

When the British took over in 1664, New York gained from the consolidation of British interests in America and the prestige of the expanding empire. There were no fundamental changes of policy so far as the basic activities of the city and the province were concerned, and New York now became meshed in the British system more completely than it had been in that of Holland in the earlier period.

The interests of the various classes in New York were identical with those of similar classes in London. Differences were to develop later, but what came to be known as the Atlantic System—primarily British-American—had its roots in the economic fabric woven in provincial days. It survived the Revolution; it passed through two world wars; and it is still too close to permit severance without threatening disaster. All the British Acts of Trade, from 1660 to 1694, expanded and systematized the principles of mercantilism. It was this system

that caused the revolt of the American Colonies, and the revolt in turn helped destroy the system as it had previously existed.

When the Duke of York separated New Jersey and New York, dividing the port, shipping and trade were curtailed, and conditions were not immediately improved by the wars abroad. Governor Nicolls accomplished his main purpose, which was to take New York from the Dutch, but the country did not make marked progress until after the province was formally ceded to England by the Treaty of Westminster in 1674 and Major Edmund Andros had become the new Governor.

Andros paved the way for continuing prosperity, but he also started a sequence of events that ultimately brought on the Revolution. The Dutch had built up a demand for their flour, but it was of uneven quality and facilities were lacking to produce it in quantity. This led to the so-called "Bolting Act" of 1678, which gave the city the exclusive right to mill and pack flour and biscuit for export. Higher standards were established, which increased the demand, and production was increased to meet it.

New York's first boom followed and laid the foundations for the city's foreign commerce. Between 1678 and 1694, when the Bolting Act was repealed, the number of beef cattle slaughtered jumped from 400 to 4,000 (largely for export). City revenues rose from £2,000 to £5,000. The petitioners who opposed repeal of the Bolting Act declared that more than 600 of the 983 buildings in the city depended in one way or another on the flour trade built up by the monopoly.

New York City's coat of arms, adopted in 1682, when the present city was incorporated in the midst of the flour boom, shows the sails of a Dutch windmill with two barrels, along with two beavers, between the sails, symbolizing the chief commercial activities—furs and flour. The panel is flanked by a stalwart pioneer and an Indian. The crown on top was replaced after the Revolution by an eagle perched on top of the world.

New York's expanding trade soon encountered obstacles. The English imposed excise and internal taxes as well as a tariff of two per cent on goods imported from England and her possessions and of ten per cent on imports from other countries, with higher charges on wines and liquors.

Governor Andros's troubles grew out of his efforts to check smuggling and to collect tribute from the Indians. Wars in Europe encouraged privateering and piracy. When the British tried to collect duties and to stop smuggling by sending over troops to be quartered on the Colonies, more friction developed. The situation was aggravated when New York was made the base of operations against the French and their Indian allies, thus adding to the military expense of the province.

For a century before the Revolution, the American Colonies were at war,

economically, not only against the British crown but also against the mercantile system as practiced by a tyrannical government that persisted in treating its colonies as overseas estates to be exploited by the mother country. More and more this revolt against restrictions on colonial trade centered in New York.

New York had plenty of liberty lovers who were battling for greater religious and political freedom. Some of them were hotheads and extremists, but the leaders in the continuing struggle against restrictions on trade were conservative merchants and traders. Even the turbulent workers, however, knew that their well-being depended on waterfront activities. There was a real community of interests centering in trade. From earliest days the populace knew that more ships in the harbor meant more jobs and more business. And no one liked taxation, especially taxes imposed by a parliament sitting in London.

New York, despite British restrictions, had developed trade with the West Indies and with the other colonies. She had thrived on privateering and piracy while England was having her wars with Spain, Holland, and France. During the entire period of British rule, New York was engaged in a free-booting war for the freedom of the seas and freedom of trade. She was trying to get down barriers to trade, not only with England and her colonies but also between all nations.

Evasions of restrictions ranged from smuggling to piracy, and persons of prominence connived in both. The government encouraged privateering, which often led to piracy. Captain Kidd was a highly respected citizen who contributed to the building of Trinity Church and was employed by the City Council, and the Assembly in 1691 voted him £150 for services rendered to the province.

King William, the Earl of Bellomont, Robert Livingston, and other people in high places provided Kidd with a vessel to engage in privateering during the war with Spain. Kidd either did not regard himself as a criminal or thought he was immune from punishment, since he appeared in Boston after selling his vessel. He was put under arrest by Bellomont, but the latter was accused of partnership with him. It is said that the charges against Bellomont were pressed by New York merchants because as Governor he had been so vigorous in enforcing the Acts of Trade.

Heavy duties on imports, and especially on textiles, led to the development of manufactures and bootlegging, and attempts at enforcing decrees aroused growing resentment. As early as 1711 Governor Hunter wrote: "The Colonies are infants at their mothers' breasts, but such as will wean themselves when they become of age," and the Lords of Trade were alarmed by acts which "tended to independency of the Crown."

New York's part in the long struggle of the Colonies for independence is seldom emphasized in general American histories. More stirring and colorful

incidents of the Revolution took place elsewhere. Yet New York early assumed leadership in the resistance movement growing out of restrictions on trade and taxation.

New York was the chief sufferer from these restrictions and bore the heaviest burdens of taxation, because it was the base of military operations against the French. It was only natural that the techniques used in the economic warfare that preceded open rebellion should develop there. Although patriotic liberty lovers became increasingly vocal, it was the aggressive countermeasures adopted by the Colonies that finally brought the conflict to a head.

The word "boycott" dates only from 1880, when the Irish in County Mayo refused to sell anything to Captain Boycott, the British land agent. As the word is more commonly used today, to boycott is to refuse to buy. Britain first realized that she had a revolution on her hands when the Colonies organized their campaign of non-intercourse—an agreement neither to buy nor to sell to the mother country.

New York's growth, as compared with that of the other colonies, was retarded by the navigation laws, the heavy duties, the Stamp Act, and other restrictions. Her special status grew out of the fact that, whereas other ports led in exports, New York was the center of imports. In time New York was to outdistance all other American ports and to handle a much larger percentage of exports, but the fact that imports have been largely concentrated in New York is of great economic significance.

This fact helps to explain many things about the city. Until the First World War the United States owed the rest of the world more than was owed us. This debt, plus the interest, was paid largely in goods, but other nations sought to sell as much as they could to us. During much of this time our foreign trade steadily increased, and New York was the chief beneficiary.

Though many other ports shipped out cotton, grain, and other products, imports were largely handled through New York. This steady flow of goods and other related activities were of primary importance in the city's economy. Because of it, New York suffered less than other communities from recurrent depressions. It was not until the United States became a creditor nation and we tried simultaneously to collect payment from other nations while restricting their imports to us that New York received a serious blow and became a victim, along with the world at large, of the Great Depression.

New York's experience over at least two centuries clearly demonstrates that, economically at least, the world is interdependent; that the way to prosperity and progress among nations is through the freest possible exchange of goods and services. New York discovered, way back in the days of the Dutch, that there is as much profit to be made on imports as on exports, if not more; that foreign trade is a two-way proposition; and that all efforts to limit such trade

are harmful. In 1768-1769, as a protest against import taxes, New York cut her imports from England from £490,674 to £75,931. There was great joy when the Stamp Act was repealed and the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York was founded in the Long Room of Fraunces Tavern in 1769 and chartered by George III the next year.

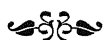
Whereas the other colonies had special products, such as tobacco or sugar, indigo or cotton, to sell, New York traded in many kinds of products. She even sent pickled oysters from Gowanus to Trinidad, and she imported all the foreign goods the people could afford to buy and, in addition, handled smuggled goods, bootlegged manufactures, the cargoes brought in by privateers, and the loot of pirates.

The story of New York's development as a center of commerce under British rule, the evasions of restrictions, the almost open defiance of the London government, and the extremes to which the sailors and traders of New York went in following their concepts of the freedom of the seas and of trade is intertwined with that of the long struggle for political liberty. It is a story of lawlessness ending in revolution, with New York City taking a leading part in the fight. Tenant farmers on the manorial estates up the Hudson might be indifferent, but the people of New York City never for a moment forgot that their interests were in waterbound trade.

This was equally true in the period following the Revolution, when the new states generally pursued separate policies. New York City was hit harder than any other American city by the years of British occupation. Her shipping and commerce were practically destroyed, and the British had no intention of permitting the new states to take business away from them.

How New York surmounted her handicaps is a chapter of local history that has special interest. The badly battered old trading post did not wait until the Federal government was established before starting her spectacular climb to supremacy as a port and center of commerce. This called for more pioneering and the development of leadership—the organization of machinery and the mobilization of resources which were to bring about a revolution in trade, commerce, and finance as important in its effects as throwing off the British yoke.

Chapter Five



The City of Ships

WATCHING the “Queen Elizabeth” cross New York Bay gives no clue to Walt Whitman’s enthusiasm for New York as “The City of Ships.” Designed solely for the New York run, the “Queen Elizabeth” is as truly a New York product as the Empire State Building. The City Walt celebrated was literally the product of the ships that pushed their prows halfway across South Street, crowded the bay with their sails, or splashed the waters with their paddle wheels.

New York still depends on ships, big and little. A tugboat strike could paralyze the city in a short time; a decline in shipping, if prolonged, would inevitably reduce the proud metropolis to the relative status of Visby, in the Baltic, once the center of the Hanseatic League but now mostly rose-covered ruins.

The crew of Adriaen Block’s “Tiger,” which burned in 1614, must have saved their tools, since they built huts and later rebuilt the ship and named it the “Onrest” (Restless). It was not long before other ships were being built in Nieuw Amsterdam, mostly small vessels for use on inland waterways.

In time the local shipyards were to turn out seagoing ships to match the vessels that anchored in the East River, between the Fort and the Stadt Huys, at points indicated by sign boards. Governor Andros supplemented the old pier built by Peter Stuyvesant by erecting a city dock of stone, and he stimulated shipping in many ways, as did successive British governors. Even the restrictive measures increased shipping by encouraging smuggling. In 1677 sailing craft from New York consisted of three ships, seven boats, and eight sloops. By 1694, because of the development of trade, this fleet had been increased to sixty ships, forty boats, and twenty-five sloops.

New York’s determination to survive and resume her role as a center of commerce was made manifest as soon as the Revolution was over. On February

22, 1784, a few months after the Treaty of Peace was signed, Robert Morris and other New Yorkers backed a daring new venture by sending the "Empress of China" to Canton, and this marked the opening of trade with China which was to prove so profitable.¹

Although the Colonies had won their freedom, they were not yet a nation and their trade with the rest of the world was severely limited. Britain continued to hamper the trade of her former colonies. The Spaniards still held the mouth of the Mississippi, and the British or French controlled the St. Lawrence. Trading along the coast and on inland waterways, however, gradually revived, and New York shipping was aided by the adoption in 1789 of the first Federal protective tariff, which increased shipbuilding and put New York in the lead of other American ports.

The story of John Jacob Astor is significant as well as interesting, not only because he became the richest man in New York but also because it reveals the methods and the spirit of the times. Astor arrived in New York a year after the close of the Revolution and got a job with a Pearl Street baker. In two years he was in business for himself, selling musical instruments. By 1789 he had branched out into the fur business and had bought two lots on Bowery Lane. A year later he was listed as a "fur trader" at 40 Little Dock (now Water) Street.

Astor learned the fur business the hard way. From his trips upstate he discovered that the best furs were going to Canada, and importations from Canada were prohibited. He worked for a fur merchant named Robert Browne, a Quaker, who sent him to Montreal to buy furs and ship them direct to London. When Britain, under the Treaty of 1794, removed her military posts on the Great Lakes, the way was opened for Astor to expand his business, and he pushed on westward until he reached the Pacific Northwest. Equally enterprising on sea or land, Astor was soon heavily involved in the China trade, which included taking Yankee notions from the eastern seaboard to the Northwest, where they were exchanged for furs. The furs were then taken to Canton, along with sandalwood picked up in the Hawaiian Islands. The ships came back from China loaded with tea, silk, and other oriental products much in demand. A New Yorker had found a route to the East more practical than that sought by the early explorers and a method of trading that was more profitable than the old mercantile system.

Some of Astor's methods were highly questionable, even for that era, but his enterprises were not monopolies. He was initiating the system of "free enter-

¹ For the detailed story of the harbor see Richard C. McKay, *South Street*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934); Thomas E. Rush, *The Port of New York*, (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1920); and Writers' Program of Works Project Administration for the City of New York, *Maritime History of New York*, (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1941).

prise" and pioneering in that wilderness of laissez-faire economics which was to be so thoroughly exploited before it in turn developed evils demanding drastic reforms. Astor took advantage of new conditions to develop and expand the fur business which had brought the Dutch to New Netherland, and his first enterprises reached their inevitable end when the fur-bearing animals were virtually exterminated; but his related activities were of tremendous historic importance.

Although the Atlantic seaboard had been settled for a century and a half, only a few daring souls had moved inland more than a hundred and fifty miles. Astor's success was a prime factor in directing attention to the hinterland. Long before Horace Greeley exhorted young men to go west, Astor was giving the same directions to enterprise. The great difficulty was transportation. Navigation of the inland waterways by sailing vessels was slow and tedious. Even the mighty Hudson, reaching farther inland than any river except the St. Lawrence, was not entirely free of ice in winter, and the palisades and tides handicapped small vessels that depended on wind.

New York's most important contribution to the new era was the successful application of steam to navigation. In Europe over a long period efforts had been made to use steam engines to propel ships, and many similar experiments were made here. William Henry, Elijah Ormsbee, David Wilkinson, Samuel Morey, Nicholas J. Roosevelt, John Stevens, and Chancellor Livingston conducted experiments and made contributions to the steamboat. James Rumsey built a boat propelled by a jet of water forced out of the stern by pumps powered by steam. Christopher Colles, who first proposed the Erie Canal and had a scheme for pumping water from Collect Pond to a reservoir on Broadway, suggested using steam engines to propel ferryboats.

As early as 1787 John Fitch operated his steam scow on the Delaware between Philadelphia and Burlington. His device consisted of paddle wheels operated with a revolving chain. George Washington, Jefferson, and other leaders were vitally interested in these experiments, and the rivalry between Fitch and Rumsey was especially acute; but Fitch died in 1798 without realizing his dream, and Rumsey's experiments gave way to the more scientific and practical efforts of Robert Fulton, who was supported by Chancellor Livingston. Fulton, Livingston, Stevens, and other steamboat enthusiasts did not expect such vessels to go to sea. There was too much wind on the ocean, and not enough to speed ships on rivers and along canals. They were planning to use steam vessels on the Hudson, the Ohio, and the Mississippi.

Fulton's "Clermont" was built at Charles Brownne's shipyard, on an oasis of solid ground surrounded by salt marsh, near Corlears Hook, now the site of Vladeck Houses and a park. The place was a part of the DeLancey estate, for-

feited after the Revolution, and was known as "Manhattan Island." It was long used as a shipyard, and many other famous vessels were built in the vicinity.

Livingston secured a twenty-year monopoly to operate steamboats on the Hudson in 1798, before he had met Fulton and years before a practical steam vessel existed. This charter was renewed from time to time, and after the "Clermont's" advent in 1807 a line was established to Albany. Later, steam ferries were operated around the harbor, among them the famous Fulton Ferry to Brooklyn. Streets were named for Fulton in lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, and a zinc and copper statue of the inventor, by Caspar Buberl, was placed in the Brooklyn ferry house in 1872. This was rescued from a junk yard, in 1930, by the Society of Old Brooklynites and placed in Fulton Park, at Fulton Street and Stuyvesant Avenue.

Despite her magnificent harbor, New York was not specially favored by transatlantic vessels on that account. The Atlantic was perilous sailing, and the trade winds had caused routes and ports to develop farther south. For a period Halifax was preferred as a terminal for North Atlantic traffic. New York's greatest handicaps after the Revolution, however, came from European wars, with their blockades, piracy, and privateering.

In an effort to keep out of the British-French war, the Federal government imposed the long embargo, in 1806-1807, and the short embargo in 1810. Both were severe blows to New York. But the War of 1812 provided the incentive which led to feverish shipbuilding, privateering, and blockade running by American vessels, with increased development of inland shipping. Master shipbuilders, with their mechanics, traveled inland from New York's East Side to build, on the shores of the Great Lakes, the vessels that gave victory to Commodore Perry and prevented a British invasion by way of Canada.

As pioneers pushed westward transportation became increasingly important. Long before the Revolution, George Washington and others had been interested in connecting the Potomac and the Ohio by a canal. After the Revolution, Washington continued to press this scheme, and a meeting called to discuss the terms of navigation led to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, the drafting of the Constitution, and the setting up of the federal government.

In the minds of Washington, Jefferson, and others of the Founding Fathers, the Potomac was to be the channel of commerce between the West and the world at large. This was the chief factor in locating the nation's capital at what was then the head of navigation of one of the two rivers reaching farthest inland. The other river was the Hudson. A canal following the Hudson and Mohawk valleys offered an even better route to the West than the Potomac. It was longer, but it traversed more fertile land, and canalization was considered feasible, even by Washington, who was interested in this project despite the fact that it rivaled his own Potomac plan. He foresaw that the new country

would ultimately need many routes to the West, but he planned to complete the Potomac scheme first.

Washington's project was frustrated by the persistence of sectional feeling which retarded national development in other ways and intensified competition between the states. In that competition, New York's initiative and enterprise soon led the other states. The embargoes had stimulated interest in the proposals to link the Great Lakes by a canal. Gouverneur Morris had shown an interest in this as early as 1777, and many years later he was to survey the route. After studying European canals, Elkanah Watson made a report to General Schuyler in 1791, but two decades were to pass before anything was done.

De Witt Clinton was Mayor of New York City in 1810, when the second embargo was imposed by Jefferson. There was bitter opposition to the Federal policy, just as there was opposition to the War of 1812, both of which hit New York hard. With transportation by sea cut off, New York turned with greater enthusiasm to overland business. It was during this period that a good highway to Boston and New England was first projected, resulting in the development of Boston Post Road. But better transportation to the West was much more important. In those days it took three weeks and cost \$100 to bring a ton of wheat from Oswego on Lake Ontario to New York City. It could be shipped by way of Montreal for a third of this cost.

De Witt Clinton assumed leadership in advancing the Erie Canal project and never slackened his efforts until it was finished and opened. When the legislature balked at initiating the canal, on the ground that it would be too costly, Clinton took the issue to the voters. The most ardent supporters of the project were the merchants and shipping interests in New York, who realized what it would mean to the port. Other communities along the route, however, were "sold" and their support was secured. Farmers, land speculators, and others also favored the scheme.

Clinton ran for Governor in 1816 and made the canal the chief issue in his campaign. The Legislature authorized the Erie and Champlain canals in April 15, 1817, and on July 4 of that year the first work was started near Rome. Construction took eight years, and over two thousand men were employed. The cost was \$8,000,000, and the canal was opened to traffic on October 26, 1825, when the "Seneca Chief" reached New York from Buffalo and Governor Clinton mingled the waters of Lake Erie with those of the Atlantic. Freight rates dropped from \$100 to \$6 a ton. The total revenues exceeded all estimates and in five years were paying 12 per cent on the investment. Most important of all, the canal made New York City the real gateway to the nation and permanently established the city as the leading port and trade center of the Western world.

Meanwhile, after the War of 1812 New York's ocean shipping had increased, but it was a hazardous and unsatisfactory business. Sailings were irregular, and

all ships were at the mercy of the treacherous Atlantic. In 1818 the Black Ball Packet Line was started and advertised regular scheduled sailings. These and other packets were flush-deck vessels; although faster than earlier sailing ships they were dangerous, and passengers and cargo were in peril in bad weather.

The packets were gradually improved, and shipping steadily increased, with New York becoming second only to London as a port by 1840, when travel by packets reached its zenith. The "Savannah," the first steamship to cross the Atlantic, sailed from Savannah on May 24, 1819, but it was twenty years before a steamship crossing was made from Europe to New York. Steamships were being used on rivers and lakes and along the American coasts, but the British inaugurated this kind of service on the high seas. The "Great Western" and the "Sirius" were the first to come into New York, in 1838. Later Samuel Cunard, with subsidized steam packets, began to offer serious competition to American sailing vessels, both overseas and along the coast.

Although the British were making progress in developing subsidized steamships, these were slow in replacing sailing ships. There was plenty of business for all kinds of ships, and American sailing vessels were constantly being improved. New York's leading advocate of steamships was Edward K. Collins, who sold all his sail packets in 1845 and began building steamships. He received a subsidy for carrying mail between Liverpool and New York, but at first this was far less than that given to the Cunard steamers by the British government.

The era of the picturesque clipper ships had a dramatic beginning, a glorious climax, and an ignominious end. The difference in time between the fastest sailing ships and the earlier steamers was not of great importance, and steamships had definite limitations. Although coal had replaced wood as fuel, steamers needed coaling stations at convenient points, and this put them at a disadvantage on long trips such as those around Cape Horn to China, or to the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

The fast Yankee clippers, developed between 1846 and 1860, met the real needs of American enterprise during this period. Clippers followed the "Empress of China" to the Far East; they began racing each other across the Atlantic or trading in the Near East, Latin America and elsewhere as rival merchants sought to meet the growing demands for foreign goods.

Despite the steady improvements in steamships, the short career of the American clippers was exciting and glamorous. The famine in Ireland in 1847 and the discovery of gold in California gave impetus to the perfection and use of the graceful and fast clipper ships. New York benefited enormously from the competition of these trading vessels, which made their owners and builders rich and provided feverish activity in the shipyards and in the stores on South Street.

American steamships also began to provide real competition for the British in the Atlantic trade, and at one time the Collins Line received subsidies equaling or slightly exceeding those given to the Cunard Line. These rivals were constantly engaged in speed contests, and the crossing time was steadily reduced as mechanisms were improved. There was more popular enthusiasm, however, for the romantic clippers.

The fast clippers were owned or leased by merchants, who sent them around the world loaded with Yankee notions that were exchanged for the foreign goods so much in demand. Though there was keen rivalry and competition between the merchants engaged in this trade, it was Big Business and required a lot of capital. Heavy risks were taken to make big profits.

Abiel Abbot Low, whose firm inaugurated the clipper type of ship with the "Hanza" in 1844, became the leading owner and operator of clippers. He made a large fortune and became the outstanding merchant of New York in his day. Among his other activities he was associated with Cyrus W. Field in promoting the Atlantic cable.

Clippers and other types of sailing vessels were destined in any event to give way to steamships, but Mr. Low attributed their decline and passage not to the competition of steamships but to the cable. According to Mr. Low, the cable made it possible for any "petty trader who aspired to the honors of importation" to place orders aboard for small quantities of goods and share in the profits of the owners of clippers.

Other momentous changes were in the making. The opening of the Suez Canal made it practical for steamships to take over the China trade. The gold rush to California, which greatly stimulated the building of clippers and other ships, also gave impetus to transcontinental railroad building. It became increasingly difficult for American ships to compete with the heavily subsidized vessels of other countries. As the continent was opened up, other opportunities for capital and labor developed. Young men were no longer attracted to the sea in numbers, and capital began to pour into railroads and other enterprises directly related to the opening of the frontiers.

The panic of 1857 was a temporary blow to American shipping. After a series of marine disasters and the withdrawal of subsidies, the Collins Line went into bankruptcy and its ships were sold. The era of sailing ships was over. For a time a few clippers remained in the China and Australian trade, but by degrees the picturesque old clippers shifted to the coastal routes or became tramps carrying guano and other noxious cargoes.

The modern era in shipping began in New York in June, 1860, when the sensational new "Great Eastern" came into port. The British were far ahead of the Americans in the construction of steamships. The "Great Eastern" was 680 feet long, with ten boilers and 90-ton paddle wheels. Not until 1899 after

Greater New York had come into being, was the "Great Eastern" exceeded in size by the White Star liner "Oceanic," which was only 5 feet 7 inches longer. Otherwise, of course, there had been great improvements in steamships, which were now being built of steel. New York enterprise, which produced the first steamboat, did not make comparable contributions in the subsequent development of steamships.

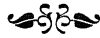
The Civil War was the final blow in a series of events which left the United States outclassed on the high seas. Confederate raiders destroyed 110,000 tons of shipping, much of it from New York. Many ships sought foreign registry and never came back under our flag, which was fast disappearing in world ports. Thereafter most American shipping was carried in foreign bottoms, and there was great rivalry for this business. All the great foreign lines began concentrating on the New York run. After the "Oceanic" the ships became larger and larger, and as the luxury business increased the great ships became symbols of the nations that subsidized them. Profits from operations were secondary. The more pretentious liners seldom justified their enormous costs as carriers, but they were important factors in the great international competition in which the various nations sought either prestige and trade or the building up of their merchant marines as auxiliary naval forces.

The British, German, French, Dutch, Italian, and Scandinavian lines all built their finest ships for the New York business. In this way New York, after providing the stimulus and enterprise that developed its own international trade and opened up the continent by constructing the Erie Canal and developing coastal and railroad shipping, performed a like service to the world at large. The development of super liners, which reached its climax in the "Queen Elizabeth," the "Normandie," and other great vessels, was as much a New York enterprise as the building of skyscrapers. No comparable vessels were ever built for any other route anywhere in the world, and, regardless of what their nationality may be, they are as much a part of New York and her history as the "Half Moon" or Rockefeller Center.

In the same way and for the same reasons, New York played an important part in developing other cities and countries. The China trade, built up by New York clippers, opened up the Far East, including Japan, and led to the construction of the Panama Canal and all the other developments that have followed in the Pacific and in Latin America. The ships that passed through the Narrows made New York and what we call modern civilization possible. From Brooklyn Bridge, people still living could have seen much of this history symbolized by ships in the harbor, from the last of the clippers to the mighty "U.S.S. Missouri" (on whose deck MacArthur accepted Japan's surrender) making her way to the Navy Yard where she was built.

Part Two: » THE PREVAILING
WINDS OF FREEDOM

Chapter Six



Some Early Battles for Liberty

NEW YORK salutes the New World of the Four Freedoms with confidence and a good conscience. In the latest crusade for greater human rights it is not an untried recruit. The town has grown old in the fight and welcomes reinforcements. Despite occasional lulls and local storms, the prevailing breezes around the harbor have been those of an expanding liberalism.

Liberty and democracy have never been ideological abstractions in this city. They are intuitive and have found expression in practice and precept rather than in polemics. When necessary, they have been fought for by daring attacks or stubborn defense. They have always been vigilantly guarded.

There are many kinds of freedom in New York, some going back to Indian and Dutch times. Others are the outgrowth of ways of life and collective efforts that have been more recently tested. The indigenous composite differs greatly from radical systems imposed elsewhere on peoples who have encountered difficulties in making them work.

New York still owes more to the Dutch than is appreciated. Nieuw Amsterdam was a province of the Dutch Republic. The Netherlands had been imbued with the humanism of Erasmus as well as with the more liberal political and economic philosophies which were slowly gaining ground in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In a sense, the first American Revolution took place in Holland.

Seven provinces of the Spanish Netherlands achieved independence about 1566, and the United Netherlands won recognition in the spring of 1609, about the time Henry Hudson set sail on the "Half Moon." The humane and judicial attitude of the States-General is shown in the early charters relating to New Netherland. Although these charters granted the West India Company privileges and monopolies which seem extraordinary today, they were liberal for the period and were steadily broadened. A Council of Five was created to

assist the Director General, and together they exercised all the legislative, executive, and judicial powers, subject to approval by the Chamber.

Under the Charter of Privileges and Exemptions issued by the West India Company in 1629, favored persons had a choice of unoccupied land extending sixteen miles along the coast or on one side of a navigable stream, or eight miles along a river on both sides, and as far into the country "as the situation of the occupier will permit," except on Manhattan Island. At the same time any private person could, with the approval of the Director General, take up as much land as he could improve.

Thus began the patroon system, which soon caused trouble. Although the contracts were voluntary, the workers on the big estates were virtually slaves. The patroons overreached themselves when they claimed unrestricted trade rights within their huge estates. This brought them into conflict with the company and they were curbed. The patroon system failed as a colonizing scheme, and the more liberal land policy inaugurated in 1640 attracted settlers who were of more independent minds than the workers on the manorial estates.

This became evident when the Indian outbreaks, brought on by Kieft's policies, placed a heavy burden on the population. When he attempted to tax them to strengthen the defenses of the city, they demanded representation in the government. Kieft called an assembly in August, 1641, to deal with the Indian problem; but, when a board of twelve men appointed by the Assembly demanded reforms, he denied its authority and dissolved it. Two years later he called another assembly, but it challenged his right to levy certain taxes. When Kieft refused to yield, the Assembly petitioned the States-General for his recall; the petition was granted. Thus the issue of "taxation without representation" was raised at the very beginning of New York's history.

Peter Stuyvesant, who arrived in New Amsterdam in 1647, was even more autocratic than Kieft. Another step, however, was taken toward popular representation when inhabitants were permitted to nominate eighteen persons, from among whom nine men, "as is customary in the Fatherland," were to give advice and to assist in promoting the general welfare. Stuyvesant and his Council began by exercising almost absolute authority, but it brought about a revolt.

Adriaen Van der Donck, of the Board of Nine Men, drew up a remonstrance against Stuyvesant, and when Van der Donck was removed the board petitioned the States-General for a hearing for him. The remonstrance set forth an accumulation of grievances against Kieft and Stuyvesant, intimating favoritism and corruption. It charged that the grist mill was so rotten from a leaky roof that "it could not go with more than two arms," thus adding to the bread shortage. Fort Amsterdam was described as a "mole hill," and when people were asked for money to strengthen it they claimed that they were too poor or, from fear of Stuyvesant, did not want a strong fort.

The Nine Men asked for a "burgher or municipal government" suitable for the province and "resembling somewhat the laudable institutions of [the] Fatherland." As a result of this petition, the States-General in 1650 authorized a new Council, to consist of a President or Director, one Vice-Director, and three Councilors, one each to be appointed by their High Mightinesses and the West India Company and the other by the resident inhabitants. Article 17 read: "There shall be within the City of New Amsterdam a Burgher government consisting of a Schout [Sheriff], two Burgomasters and five Schepens."

Further concessions were soon made. Until 1653 the city and province were co-ordinate, but in that year the city was provided with a separate government, modeled on Amsterdam, with a schout, five burgomasters, nine schepens, and a Council of thirty-six—of which the fourteen first named constituted a Board or College and were vested with the right to make all city laws and ordinances. The city government also included a Bench of Justice, consisting of two burgomasters and five schepens, whose decisions were appealable and revokable by the Governor and his Council.

Although the officers were to be "elected" and were to constitute a court, Stuyvesant stubbornly held his power over appointments and declared that the change did not in any way diminish his powers and that of his Council "to make ordinances or publish particular interdicts even for New Amsterdam." Stuyvesant remained an autocrat to the end, but a strong civic consciousness was developing.

In 1657 the status of citizens was defined as Great and Small Burgo-rights. The Great Burgo-right was given to all former and present provincial officials, burgomasters, schepens, Dutch clergymen, and commissioned officers to the Ensign inclusive of the city regiment, and to their descendants in the male line, provided an established residence had not been forfeited by failure to keep "fire and light through absence from the city." Public officials could be chosen only from this class.

The Small Burgo-right was granted to all male inhabitants who had "kept fire and light" within the city for one year and six weeks and to all native-born inhabitants or those who had married or thereafter married native-born daughters of burghers. Other persons who kept shops and carried on business in the city were required to obtain small burgher rights from the burgomasters and pay twenty guilders to the city treasury.

Not only were Dutch cities and towns little republics, but the Netherlands was second to no nation in Europe in religious and political freedom. The University of Leyden was perhaps the most advanced institution of learning in the world. Dutch settlers in New Netherland came from free cities in a liberal country and were a tolerant folk. Holland had become the haven of religious dissenters from other countries, and the States-General purposed the same free-

dom in New Netherland. In the beginning Dutch settlers brought their clergymen with them, and there were no conflicts between them over religion in New Amsterdam. Some of the Governors of the province were not so liberal.

Besides being autocratic and crotchety, peg-legged Peter Stuyvesant had a streak of intolerance that was strongly resented by the Dutch as well as by the English settlers, many of whom were dissenters. How he was successfully defied and religious liberty firmly established is one of the most stirring and significant incidents in the long fight for freedom of worship.

Quakers first came to New Amsterdam by mistake in 1657, the year the city got its first separate government. The "Woodhouse," a small coasting vessel, started from England to Boston, but, being without a sextant, it followed an inaccurate compass and landed in New Amsterdam. On board were eleven Quaker preachers. Six of them went on to Rhode Island, where Roger Williams had won his battle for religious freedom. Two of the group who remained in New Amsterdam were arrested for preaching in the streets.

Robert Hodgson and four of the Quakers then went to eastern Long Island, where they visited English settlements. At one of them Hodgson was flogged, sentenced to penal servitude, and later banished. However, the Quakers were treated more kindly in Flushing, which had been settled by an English group that came to New Netherland by way of Vlissingen on the Scheldt. They had received the patent for their land from Governor Kieft in 1645, after paying the Matinnecock Indians an ax per acre. The Indians, however, reserved perpetual rights to the bulrushes in the salt marsh that is now Flushing Meadow Park, site of the New York World's Fair of 1939-40 and temporary headquarters of the United Nations Assembly.

It was said that "there were as many opinions as there were men" in the Flushing settlement, and the women seem to have been equally independent in their thinking. There was no established church in Flushing until forty years after the British took over, but the people were tolerant of all faiths, including that of the Quakers, who began to preach the gospel of George Fox in the vicinity. Governor Stuyvesant was particularly aroused by the invasion of this "abominable sect" and determined to suppress it. Invoking a law, long in disuse, declaring the Reformed Church to be the official religion of the province, he issued an edict forbidding any person to harbor a Quaker, under penalty of fine and banishment.

John Bowne had come to Flushing by way of Boston in 1651 and had bought a farm. Ten years later he built the easterly part of his house, which is still standing. He had married Hannah Feke, daughter of Lieutenant Robert Feke of New England.¹ Hannah Bowne attended the secret Quaker meetings held

¹ Hannah's mother, Elisabeth, was the cousin and widow of Governor Winthrop's son, Henry. Her elder sister, Elizabeth, was the second wife of Captain John Underhill, the Indian fighter.

in the woods and became a member of the Society of Friends. Later her husband attended the meetings, at first out of curiosity, but eventually he became a convinced Quaker.

Considerable resentment was caused by Stuyvesant's edict against Quakers, and on December 27, 1657, twenty-six freeholders of Flushing, joined by two others from Jamaica, drew up and signed a "Remonstrance" addressed to Governor Stuyvesant. The Flushing Charter of October 10, 1645, had declared that the settlers were "to have and enjoy the Liberty of Conscience, according to the custome and manner of Holland, without molestation or disturbance."

The Flushing Remonstrance, which has been called the first American Declaration of Independence, was presented to Governor Stuyvesant in the Council Chamber in Manhattan. Stuyvesant made a violent scene, and the messengers were arrested. For a time Quakers were not openly harbored, but they continued to hold clandestine meetings in the Flushing woods. Later John Bowne invited them to meet in his house.

For this gross offense, Bowne was arrested and taken to Fort Amsterdam. The Council on September 14, 1662, found him guilty of "transactions of the most dangerous consequences." He was ordered to pay a fine of twenty-five pounds, Flemish, and was warned that a second offense would mean a double fine and that a third would mean banishment from the province. Bowne refused to pay his fine or to promise not to repeat his offense. At first, it is said, he was put in a solitary dungeon in the fort, on a diet of bread and water. Later he was moved to the Stadt Huys, where his wife and friends were allowed to visit him.

If his captors thought that Bowne could be persuaded by such treatment they were wrong. He remained an obdurate prisoner, even refusing to take advantage of opportunities offered him to escape. Finally, after three months, Governor Stuyvesant put him on a ship to be taken back to Holland. The ship landed in Ireland and Bowne crossed Ireland and England, visiting many Quakers there before he arrived in Amsterdam in February, 1663.

By this time the directors of the West India Company knew all about his case. At first they tried to get him to sign a paper of recantation. Bowne refused in these words: "Friends, the paper drawn up for me to subscribe I have perused and weighed, and do find the same not according to that engagement to me through one of your members, viz: That he or you would do therein by me as you would be done unto, and not otherwise. But, truly, I cannot think that you did in sober earnest ever think I would subscribe to any such thing. It being the very thing for which I rather chose freely to suffer want of the company of my dear wife and children, imprisonment of my person, the ruin of my estate in my absence there, and the loss of my goods here, than to yield or consent to such an unreasonable thing as you hereby would enjoin me unto. I have with patience and moderation waited several weeks expecting justice from you, but behold an addition to my oppression in the measure I receive.

Wherefore, I have this now to quest for you, that the Lord will not lay this to your charge, but to give eyes to see and hearts to do justice, that you may find mercy with the Lord in the day of Judgment. John Bowne.”

After his fourth month in Holland, the Amsterdam authorities capitulated. They released Bowne and sent the following decision to Governor Stuyvesant:

We, finally, did see from your last letter, that you had exiled and transported hither a certain Quaker named John Bowne, and although it is our cordial desire that similar and other sectarians might not be found there, yet as the contrary seems to be the case, we doubt very much if rigorous proceedings against them ought not to be discontinued except you intend to check and destroy your population, which, however, in the youth of your existence, ought rather to be encouraged by all possible means. Wherefore it is our opinion that the consciences of men, at least, ought ever to remain free and unshackled. Let every one be unmolested as long as he is modest, as long as his conduct in a political sense is unimpeachable, as long as he does not disturb others or oppose the government. This maxim of moderation has always been the guide of the magistrates of the Netherlands, and the consequence has been that from every land people have flocked to this asylum. Tread thus in their steps, and we doubt not that you will be blessed. Signed: The Directors of the West India Company, Amsterdam Department, Abraham Wilmanclonk, David Von Baerle.

Not only did John Bowne's victory over Governor Stuyvesant end the persecution of Quakers; it was also a beginning of real religious liberty in New Netherland and had other important repercussions. William Penn visited John Bowne in 1683 and on his return to England in 1688 induced his friend, the Duke of York, later James I, to guarantee religious liberty to New York.²

The Articles of Capitulation signed by Stuyvesant when he surrendered to Colonel Nicolls guaranteed to citizens of New York permanent liberty of conscience and of divine worship; enjoyment of their own customs concerning inheritances; property rights, confirmation of judgments, and right of appeal therefrom to the States-General; and continuance of present officers until new ones were elected.

Nieuw Amsterdam thus became New York, Fort Amsterdam became Fort James, and the English portions of Long Island, Staten Island, and Westchester became "Yorkshire." A convention held in Hempstead, Long Island, in 1665 promulgated "the Duke's Laws" under which Yorkshire was ruled. The first English laws gave a voice in town governments through elected boards of over-

² John Bowne returned to America by way of England and Barbados. He gave land for a Quaker burial ground in Flushing. On an addition to this land the present Quaker Meeting House was built in 1694. John Bowne's first wife, Hannah Feke Bowne, became a Quaker preacher and made two religious visits to England and one to Holland. Bowne went to England and remained with her there until her death in 1677. George Fox had visited Flushing in 1672 and stayed with Bowne. Some of their correspondence is on view in the Bowne House.

seers and constables, and the Town Boards acted as courts in minor cases. The Duke's Laws did not go into effect in the rest of New York until after the brief second Dutch occupation in 1674, but they continued to operate until 1687 or 1691.

Colonel Nicolls set up in New York a new city government consisting of a mayor, a sheriff, and aldermen, but otherwise the Nicolls Charter of June 12, 1665, generally confirmed all previous laws, grants, privileges, and concessions, and these remained unchanged under Francis Lovelace, who replaced Nicolls in 1667. Edmund Andros, who became Governor on July 1, 1674, promptly proclaimed continuance of the Nicolls Charter. When Andros was called to London, in 1681, to answer charges growing out of his troubles with Carteret and his administration of revenues, a demand for a representative assembly was made, accompanied by a refusal to pay customs duties and by other acts of insubordination.

Colonel Thomas Dongan, who replaced Andros, was more conciliatory. At Fort James on October 17, 1683, he called the conference at which the famous Charter of Liberties and Privileges was promulgated. This is the first legislative charter in which the power of the people is recognized. All legislative authority was vested in the Governor, the Council, and the People, represented by an Assembly elected by freeholders and freemen at least once every three years. Religious liberty and trial by jury were assured, and no taxes could be imposed without the consent of the Assembly.

New York was now on its way toward political as well as religious liberty. Having won these rights, the people were eager to attain others. The British, to strengthen their defenses against the French and to gain more effective control over the colonies, had united New Jersey, New York, and New England and had made Sir Edmund Andros governor general of the Dominion of New England. When news of the revolution in England reached America in April, 1689, there was an uprising in Boston, and Andros was seized and imprisoned.

A similar revolt took place in New York—on May 31, 1689—when Jacob Leisler, a German merchant, made himself leader of a faction that seized Fort James. Nicholson, the Lieutenant Governor, deserted his post and sailed to England a month later, and Leisler called an Assembly, which gave him dictatorial powers. Although there was no threat from Catholics, Leisler claimed that his purpose was to protect the province and the Protestant religion until a new Governor was appointed. After a copy of an order from William and Mary arrived in New York, continuing all Protestants in the Colonies in office, Leisler falsely announced that he had been appointed Lieutenant Governor.

Albany defied Leisler until it was necessary to present a united front against the French and their Indian allies, who surprised and burned Schenectady in February, 1690. French attacks had also been directed against New England, and

Leisler called a conference of delegates from Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and Maryland to meet in New York on May 1, 1690, to plan concerted action against the common enemy. The expedition sent out after this conference was a failure, but this was the first step toward a union of the colonies.

Leisler proclaimed William and Mary as the new monarchs, but he was enraged when Colonel Henry Sloughter was appointed Governor over him, and he refused to give up the fort. After some blood had been shed, Leisler was arrested and executed. The execution was regarded by Leisler's supporters as an act of revenge, and for years the community was divided into Leislerians and antis. Under Leisler New York had been permitted for the first time to elect her own Mayor—Peter De Lanoy. This did not happen again until 1834.

On May 6, 1691, the Colonial Assembly adopted an act to quiet the minds and to recognize William and Mary. Governor Sloughter appointed as Mayor the celebrated Abraham DePeyster. Young and energetic, DePeyster reorganized the "Rattle Watch" into a more efficient police force under civil control. In 1691 Sloughter also re-established the Assembly, which had been abolished by James II in 1686. The fight for popular government continued, although the Leislerians and their foes seemed at times more interested in trying to gain the favor of the current Governor than in advancing the people's rights. However, when Governor Cornbury was found to have stolen £1,500 appropriated in 1703 to fortify the Narrows, the rival factions united to establish the Assembly's control over finances. In 1706 the Provincial Assembly won the right to appoint its own treasurer to administer special funds, and in 1737 continued revenue acts were replaced by annual appropriations.

After nearly two centuries the people of New York had gained a measure of control over their own affairs, but many more battles remained to be fought. Tolerance, like the city itself, is a growth. Ignorance, fear, and prejudice are human attributes shared by all, and New York has always had her quota of people with those qualities. But intolerance has been moderated by many factors and has seldom become organized. Some of New York's early outrages against Indians were as horrible as any of that period, but it did not burn witches. When in 1665 Ralph Hall and his wife were charged with witchcraft and sorcery, the jury found "some suspicions" but "nothing considerable" against them and they were merely put under bonds for a while.

The Leisler revolt was motivated by religious prejudice and fear, but it was short-lived. The Nativist movement in the middle of the nineteenth century, which produced the Know-Nothing or American party, was aimed primarily at Catholics. It won an election in New York, but in the words of Walt Whitman, written soon afterwards, the only result of its year in power "was to put to flight several score of poor 'foreign' apple-women" who had formerly turned an honest penny by selling fruit and candies to boys and girls.

Perhaps the most revealing test of tolerance in New York is its attitude toward Negroes. It is ironic that in a remonstrance to the States-General against Governor Kieft's mistreatment of the Indians, the burghers of New York recommended the importation of slaves from Brazil. Slavery was introduced and Negroes were imported in relatively large numbers—so large, in fact, that the whites ultimately became fearful of them. This led to the so-called slave insurrection in 1712, when a house was burned, several whites were killed, and there were severe reprisals. The alleged slave conspiracy of 1741 was more serious and resulted in an outbreak of violence and panic in which religious fanaticism also played a part. Thirteen Negroes were burned at the stake and eighteen hanged for an alleged conspiracy the existence of which was never proved.

As a reaction from that outrage, New York became hostile toward slavery as an institution, and the evils were gradually mitigated. John Jay became a leader of the abolition movement which led to the Act of 1799, which provided that all children born of slave parents be free, subject to apprenticeship in the case of males until the age of 28 and of females until 25, and forbade the exportation of slaves. Slavery was to persist for many years, but New York no longer profited from the traffic and thereafter all children born in New York were free.

A declaration adopted in 1817 proclaimed that all inhabitants of New York should be free after July 4, 1827. All property qualifications for white voters were abolished in 1846, but it was not until after the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was adopted in 1870 that Negroes were given equal suffrage. Meantime Negroes had been the chief victims of the violent anti-draft riots of 1863, which sprang from the ignorance and prejudices of the foreign-born population who were opposed to being drafted. The draft riots were the most violent outbreaks in the city's history, and the terrorism lasted for days.

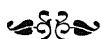
There is still plenty of intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination in New York, and much of it is still directed toward Negroes. Without minimizing in any degree the great gap between our pretensions as a democracy and the treatment of Negroes and other minority groups, probably more progress has been made in New York than elsewhere in combating intolerance.

Step by step, efforts have been made to end discrimination based on race, color, or creed. New York's city government recognizes no such distinctions. Segregation continues, but even this is being vigorously attacked; in housing, employment, and other matters involving public money or powers such discriminations are unlawful.

The tremendous influx of Negroes in recent years has presented a serious problem to New York. A large percentage of the Negroes are unskilled, which limits their opportunities for finding employment. Being poor, most of them are

compelled to live in the worst dwellings, under appalling conditions. But it cannot be said that New York has been indifferent or complacent in dealing with a problem that is national in its scope. No other community has done more to show its faith in the democratic concept that human beings, regardless of race, religion, or other considerations, are capable of bettering themselves when given freedom.

Chapter Seven



The Resistance Movement in New York

UNLIKE the resistance movement in Europe during the last war, the fight of the Colonies against oppression was in the open. The trend toward "independency of the Crown," which the Lords of Trade noted in 1711, grew out of the New York Provincial Assembly's denial of Parliament's right to tax the colony. Having successfully protested against "taxation without representation," the representatives next protested taxation itself.

That the issue was not sooner joined is explained in part by the changing economic and political conditions in England and in the Colonies. Britain was becoming more liberal, and her mercantile classes were finding colonial trade profitable. Between 1720 and 1730 merchandise worth £657,998 was sent to New York, and many people in England wanted to conciliate such good customers as the colonists.

But the Crown was confronted with increasing difficulties, not only in maintaining its authority in the Colonies but also in getting sufficient revenue from them to pay for military operations against the French. The fight for human rights is closely related to this issue. In the last analysis governments depend on the people for votes, revenue, and soldiers just as landlords, capitalists, and businessmen depend on workers and consumers. It is curious that such obvious truths are frequently overlooked.

New York early secured representation in the government, but the Provincial Assembly was not truly representative. The voting was severely limited. Many of the Colonials had a vested interest in the system under which the new country was being exploited. The Crown had plenty of supporters, but New York was developing other leaders who were representative of the general Colonial interest. The clash of interests made it increasingly important for all sides to secure the widest possible public support.

The most effective way to reach the public was through the printed word.

The Council offered £40 a year and half the profits on private printing to secure a printer in order to preserve its records and publish official documents. William Bradford, who was Philadelphia's first printer, was the first of his craft to succumb to the lure of New York and came to Pearl Street in 1693 to establish the city's first publishing house, where he printed the first book published in New York as well as the city's first newspaper.

John Peter Zenger's victory for a free press was a turning point in modern civilization, but the details of the historic sequence have been generally forgotten. Bradford's first jobs were the printing of the Council Minutes, proclamations, pamphlets, and broadsides. No one could establish a newspaper without a license, and it was some time before one appeared. Governor Fletcher, however, in 1696 ordered Bradford to reprint an issue of the *London Gazette*, which reported progress in the war with France.

It was not until 1725 that Governor William Burnet, seeking support in checking the French, had Bradford bring out the *New York Gazette* as an organ of the administration. When Benjamin Franklin left Boston for New York, he went to Bradford's printing plant looking for work. No job was open at the time, and Bradford sent young Franklin to his son in Philadelphia, where more history was being made.

But Bradford trained another apprentice, John Peter Zenger, who was to start his *New York Weekly Journal* a decade later, on November 5, 1733. Zenger's *Journal* was the size of foolscap paper and was printed in pica type. Unlike the *Gazette*, it was independent of the administration and critical of it. Before long, Zenger's sheet had aroused Governor Cosby by publishing two ballads "highly defaming the administration of His Majesty's government."

Peter Zenger's censure of Cosby and the ballads and political articles that landed him in jail seem extremely mild today. The specific article on which the charge of libel was based was in answer to the *Gazette* and merely declared that "the people of New York think, as matters now stand, that their liberties and properties are precarious, and that slavery is likely to be entailed on them and their posterity, if some past things be not amended."

The *Journal* also quoted a person who was moving from New York to New Jersey because "we see men's deeds destroyed, judges arbitrarily displaced, new courts erected without the consent of the legislature, by which it seems to me trials by juries are taken away, when a governor pleases; men of known estates denied their votes, contrary to the received practices of the best expositor of any law. Who is there in that province that can call anything his own, or enjoy any liberty longer, than those in the administration will condescend to let them do it? for which reason I left it, as I believe more will."

The Provincial Assembly had gone much further in denouncing the Court of Chancery and condemning various abuses, and Zenger's language was mild

compared with that being used in criticizing Cosby. Nevertheless Zenger was jailed. At first he was denied pen and paper, but when his bail was fixed at £800, which he could not raise, he was permitted to edit his paper from prison.

Governor Cosby ordered issues of the *Journal* containing the allegedly libelous matter burned by the hangman. The Mayor and Council refused to attend the burning, and the Assembly held aloof. The Court of Sessions forbade the hangman to obey the order, and a Negro slave belonging to the sheriff actually burned the papers.

The legal aspects of Zenger's trial are too complicated to repeat in detail. The defense and acquittal were brought about largely through the efforts of the venerable Quaker lawyer, Andrew Hamilton, speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, who won enduring fame by coming to New York to fight out the issue of the freedom of the press.

Hamilton denied that the Zenger publication was "scandalous or seditious" and offered to prove that the statements in the offensive articles were true. He tied his case firmly to the right of protest and insisted that the jury should consider the truth of what had been printed. In his conclusion Hamilton clearly stated the issue and the principle involved. He was upholding "the liberty both of exposing and opposing arbitrary power, in these parts of the world at least, by speaking and writing truth." He declared: "It is not the cause of a poor printer, nor of New York alone. No! It may, in its consequences, affect every freeman that lives under a British government on the main of America. It is the best cause, it is the cause of Liberty."

Hamilton was right. The prompt acquittal of Zenger by the jury was the real beginning of the popular movement for independence. It established the principle of the freedom of the press and of free speech as securely as the Flushing Remonstrance had established freedom of worship.

So far as New York was concerned, the right of public assembly was won by force. The Sons of Liberty Society was organized by William Smith, William Livingston, and J. Morin Scott to oppose arbitrary power. The organization took its name from a phrase used by Colonel Isaac Barre, in a speech denouncing the Stamp Act in which he declared that Americans were sons of liberty. The records of the society were secret for a while, but it was to come into the open and spearhead the popular independence movement in New York. It was John Morin Scott who wrote an article signed "Freeman," published in 1765, in which he declared that "the English government cannot long act toward a part of its dominions upon principles diametrically opposed to its own, without losing itself in the slavery it would impose upon the Colonies or teaching them to throw it off and assert their freedom."

New York by 1750 had become the focal point of resistance to British authority. On October 7, 1753, Governor George Clinton, after ten trying years,

turned the government over to Sir Danners Osborne and sailed for England. Osborne's body was found hanging in the garden of his home the next day. The Sons of Liberty were active in many ways in stirring revolt, and even the more conservative element was becoming increasingly vocal. Its opposition centered on trade, taxation, and the courts. The province was chafing under the burden of quartering British troops and had a war debt of its own of \$300,000.

Alderman Philip Livingston's arraignment of the Sugar Act preceded Samuel Adams's draft of instructions to Boston's representatives in the general court. And the New York Assembly adopted a whole series of protesting resolutions in 1762, three years before Patrick Henry's famous warning to the British king. By its resolution of October 18, 1764, the Assembly appointed a committee to correspond with the other colonial assemblies to secure united action on their common grievances. This was the beginning of the Union.

England's attempt to make the Colonies pay for the French war by revenues collected by the Stamp Act aroused New York especially. The New York call for united action was supplemented by an invitation from Massachusetts for a Colonial Congress, and the Stamp Act Congress assembled in New York's City Hall on October 7, 1765. The Stamp Act was to go into effect on November 1. While the first Colonial Congress was in session a British ship arrived in New York carrying stamps.

It was at this stage that the Sons of Liberty took over and gave direction to the popular demonstrations that followed. A crowd put up a gallows in The Fields (now City Hall Park) and hung effigies of Lieutenant Governor Colden and Lord Bute, the British Minister. Another crowd carried an effigy of Colden to the gate of Fort George and demanded the stamps being held there. The demand was refused, and, although British soldiers mounted the ramparts of the fort, Colden's carriage was seized and his effigy was placed in it. The crowd then marched around the Battery, where the cannon were spiked and the carriage, effigy and gallows burned. Later the mob burned the house of Major James, commander of the Royal Artillery, and carried off the colors of his regiment.

Meantime the more conservative faction, generally in sympathy with the mob but fearful of it, was organizing the colonies to cease importing British goods. This maneuver was doubtless more effective than the popular demonstrations and on June 4, 1766, the odious Stamp Act was repealed. But the victory only strengthened the independence movement. There was a general celebration in The Fields, with bonfires, twenty-five cannon, and a band to make noises and with roasted oxen and twenty-five barrels of beer to add to the conviviality. The band played "God Save the King," and a good time was had by all.

The Assembly, to express its gratitude, had ordered statues of King George and William Pitt, but the city could not wait for these to be made. Instead, a

pole was erected in The Fields as a part of the celebration. The British soldiers did not like the Liberty Pole and were intent on destroying it. When their first attempt to saw it and blow it up with powder failed, they turned on the crowd that gathered and drove some of the resisters into Montague's Tavern, where the soldiers broke windows and furniture and cut or bruised two of the crowd.

British officers ordered the soldiers to their barracks, but finally after three attempts on successive nights they sawed the Liberty Pole into pieces and piled them in front of the tavern. Aroused by these acts, a protest meeting was held in the park, and soldiers off duty were declared to be enemies. The 16th Regiment printed a handbill in retort. Three soldiers tried to post copies of it, but they were seized by Isaac Sears, of the Sons of Liberty, and taken to the Mayor's office.

When some twenty armed soldiers tried to rescue the men who had been seized, they were met by a crowd of citizens who were guarding the prisoners with clubs. The Mayor ordered the soldiers to the fort, but on the way they were pursued by a crowd. On Golden Hill on John Street, between Cliff and Williams, the soldiers received reinforcements and charged the crowd. Half a dozen citizens were wounded and some soldiers bruised and disarmed before officers broke up the melee and ordered the soldiers to their quarters.

This Battle of Golden Hill, on January 18, 1770, was the first violent clash between patriots and British soldiers in the American Revolution. It was followed by many other minor conflicts. Between 1766 and 1776, the Liberty Pole was cut down and replaced six times. Loyalists as well as British soldiers took part in the recurring struggles around the pole, and conservative patriots became alarmed by the growing lawlessness. Finally a pole inscribed "Liberty and Property" was permitted to stand—an indication that the tumultuous "rabble" and the conservatives of the community had reached agreement. They had common interests.

The Townshend Acts, which followed the Stamp Act, added fuel to the fire of resistance. At the same time, the Assembly refused to supply the British troops quartered in New York. Parliament countered by forbidding the merchants to do any business at all until they complied with the government's orders. The Loyalists got control of the Assembly and passed an act granting supplies for the British troops, but when in 1775 the Loyalists disapproved the first Continental Congress the Patriots called a provincial convention of their own to elect delegates to the Congress.

On April 7, 1774, when the news spread that a "tea ship" was in the harbor, a committee of the Sons of Liberty boarded the vessel and a few chests of tea were thrown overboard. The ship was refused a landing and sailed back to England.

When the British closed the Port of Boston and moved the government

to Marblehead, the New Yorkers were aroused and a protest meeting was called at Fraunces' Tavern. The attendance was so large that the meeting was adjourned to the Exchange, where the famous Committee of 51, headed by Isaac Low, drafted a letter dated May 23, 1774, now in the New-York Historical Society, calling for a Congress of the Colonies to deal with the crisis. This was the genesis of the first Continental Congress, which met in Philadelphia in 1774.

It is a curious fact that the old trade rivalry between England and the Dutch was an indirect cause of the Revolution. The Mutiny Act of 1767 called for the requisitioning of barrack supplies, including certain articles not required for troops in Europe. The New York Assembly at first refused to make the necessary appropriations. One of the so-called Townshend Acts was a bill to suspend the New York Assembly until it had complied with the terms of the Mutiny Act. A new Assembly, after an election, appropriated the money for the supplies, hence this Townshend Act was never executed.

The Act of Trade and Revenue, placing duties on importations by the Colonies of glass, lead, painters' colors, paper, and tea, revived the controversy which had been quieted by repeal of the Stamp Act. All these duties, except that on tea, were subsequently removed. The Tea Act, which was so important in bringing matters to a head, was passed by Parliament at the behest of the East India Company, after the company had appealed for relief from losses caused by the transfer of the American trade to the Dutch!

The East India Company was authorized to import tea into the Colonies "providing that the English duties should be wholly drawn back on exportation, and that no compensation need be made to the Government for consequent loss of revenue." This was expected to help the East India Company meet the competition of the Dutch. The Boston Tea Party followed. In New York the ships carrying tea were not allowed to land.

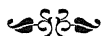
New York was active in furthering the Association which was the most important result of the first Continental Congress. This was based on an agreement to refrain from importing from or exporting to England and to promote agriculture and manufactures to offset the effects of the boycott. After the Battle of Lexington the New York Patriots called a Provincial Congress which usurped the powers of the Loyalist Assembly.

In New York, however, there was strong opposition to war. The city was exposed to the British fleet, and the northern frontier was extremely vulnerable. When in June, 1776, a vote was pending on the Declaration of Independence, even the Provincial Congress refused to instruct its delegates. Later a newly-elected Provincial Congress, infuriated by the exposure of a Loyalist plot to kill General Washington, adopted the Declaration when it met on July 9. That was the day when General Washington heard the Declaration read in The Fields and the Sons of Liberty toppled over the lead statue of George III in Bowling

Green. Washington repudiated this hotheaded act in his Orders the next day, but he was preparing for war and was to need the bullets that would be cast from the statue.

The rebellious Americans also needed money. After the occupation of New York, the city could do nothing outwardly, but many New Yorkers managed to make substantial contributions. Outstanding was the service of Haym Salomon, a Polish Jew who had arrived in New York in 1772 and married Rachael Franks, a member of a distinguished family. Salomon's activities on behalf of the American cause brought him into conflict with the British, and he was imprisoned. Escaping in 1778, he made his way to Philadelphia. He was practically penniless, but with his financial genius, his remarkable knowledge of languages, and his wife's connections he was able in 1781 to float securities amounting to \$200,000 for Robert Morris, Superintendent of Finance in the infant government.

Chapter Eight



New York as a National Capital

NEW YORK City's part in the Revolution and in establishing the Federal government is not emphasized in American histories. This story revolves around the harbor, which had been the determining factor in making New York a provincial capital. It was logical that the national capital should be located on Manhattan Island, for much the same reasons that have made New York the World's Capital City.

From near the Manhattan end of Brooklyn Bridge, where George Washington had heard the Declaration of Independence read, he was to cross on the old Brooklyn ferry on August 20, 1776, to fight and lose the Battle of Long Island. His hurried withdrawal was directed from the ferry house under the Brooklyn end of the bridge. In their next military moves the British landed forces at Kip's Bay and Turtle Bay, near the present United Nations site, in an area where many stirring incidents of the Revolution were to take place. Washington's forces, following their retreat from Brooklyn, had hastily built defenses along the shore. On September 15, 1776, five British frigates anchored offshore and opened fire, while eighty-four boats loaded with British redcoats headed for the American lines.

The Continentals were thrown into a panic and began a wild retreat along a road paralleling what is now 42nd Street, toward Harlem Heights. With sword and whip General Washington himself tried to stem the rout and turn the men about to face their pursuers. Near today's Bryant Park the British almost captured Washington before he was dragged away by his aides. In Robert Murray's mansion at Park Avenue and 37th Street, Mary Lindley Murray detained General Howe for tea while Putnam's forces made good their escape.

General Sir William Howe and General Charles Clinton made their headquarters during the Revolution at the James Beekman mansion, where a gallant young patriot was brought for trial. Nathan Hale, who took part in the siege of

Boston, had been transferred to New York and was a captain in Knowlton's Rangers. When Washington, "in the darkest hours of the Revolution," felt it imperative to ascertain the strength of the enemy, he asked General Knowlton for volunteers. Young Hale responded and, posing as a teacher with his Yale diploma in his possession, proceeded from Harlem Heights to Long Island on September 20. He accomplished his mission and returned on September 21, but he was betrayed by his Tory cousin Samuel, apprehended, and taken before General Howe. The trial took place in a greenhouse on the Beekman place, and Hale was executed the following day as a spy. A plaque at 45th Street and First Avenue long marked the spot where Hale delivered his memorable words: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." A new plaque was later placed on the Yale Club.

John André, the Swiss-French soldier poet who was an aide to General Clinton, spent the night before his capture at Beekman House. André conducted Clinton's negotiations with Benedict Arnold for the betrayal of West Point. He secured the plans of the place, but he was caught by three American militiamen before he got back to the British lines and was tried, convicted, and shot as a spy on October 2, 1780.

The British had a military storehouse on Turtle Bay at East 45th Street, within today's United Nations site. In 1773 this was stormed and raided by the Sons of Liberty, led by Marinus Willett. There is a tablet at Beaver and Wall Streets where Willett halted British ammunition wagons on their way to Boston on June 6, 1775. Willett was a descendant of Thomas Willett, a merchant and landowner and New York's first Mayor. Marinus Willett became an outstanding radical patriot and leader of the Sons of Liberty. Later he distinguished himself as an officer in the Revolution. In 1807 he was appointed to succeed De Witt Clinton as Mayor but was defeated by Clinton as a candidate for Lieutenant Governor in 1811.

Occupied by the enemy, New York could do little locally to aid the cause of liberty; but privateers were active, and some of them operated almost under the guns of the British warships and fortifications. Out in the harbor, on August 17, 1776, Nathan Hale's classmate at Yale, David Bushnell, in his one-man submarine, made his unsuccessful attack on the British frigate "Eagle." Robert Fulton was later to use Bushnell's ideas in developing submarines and steamboats.

Just above the present United Nations site the British pay ship "Hussar" ran afoul of Hell Gate; her gold treasure is still supposed to rest on the bottom of the river. In Wallabout Bay, the infamous "New Jersey" and other British prison ships were anchored, and the helpless victims of these floating hells were buried in shallow graves on the shore. In time their bones, after they were washed bare, were collected and placed by the Tammany Society in a small

building, until the more fitting vault and monument by Stanford White was erected at Fort Greene. Walt Whitman helped to convert the fort site into a park, and here on July 4, 1846, Whitman's "Ode to the Prison Ship Martyrs" was sung to the tune of "The Star Spangled Banner."

It is often assumed that New York became the capital of the nation when the first Congress met there and Washington was inaugurated in 1789. Actually it was designated as the capital of the Confederation on December 23, 1784, after the Congress, harassed by soldiers and others seeking pay, had moved successively from Philadelphia to Princeton, to Annapolis, and then to Trenton, New Jersey. Meeting in the Long Room of the French Arms Tavern, on the site now occupied by the Mechanics National Bank of Trenton, the Continental Congress passed a Resolution which read, in part as follows: ". . . that on the 24th day of December instant [1784] the Congress stand adjourned to meet at the City of New York, on the 11th day of January following."

At the same time, the Congress voted to accept the offer of the New York city government to place at its disposal, as its capitol, as much of the City Hall, "together with such other buildings as might be considered necessary for its accommodation." The old building which had succeeded the Dutch Stadt Huys as the second City Hall, at Wall and Nassau Streets, was promptly occupied in part by the government of the Confederation. New York served as the national capital for nearly six years—from December, 1784, to August, 1790.

The City Hall, erected in 1697-99, had already played an important part in history. It was used in 1700 by the Court of General Sessions, and it was the scene of John Peter Zenger's trial and acquittal. New York's first public library was opened there in 1754 by the New York Society, which is still active. The Stamp Act Congress and the "Tea Meetings," where Resolutions first calling for a Continental Congress were adopted had been held there.

The building was desecrated during the British occupation, but it was rehabilitated after the Revolution and Governor Clinton called the Council of the Southern District of New York to meet there in 1783. On December 15, 1783, New York was established as the first American city to be chartered after the Revolution, and Senator James Duane was inaugurated Mayor. From 1701 to 1785 the City Hall was used by both the city and state governments.

On September 18, 1788, when the Continental Congress designated New York as the nation's capital under the Constitution, Mayor Duane and the City Council resolved to turn over the entire building to the new national government and to provide for putting it in "proper order and repair." Extensive alterations were started under the direction of Major Charles Pierre L'Enfant, but the money to pay for them was raised by private subscription and L'Enfant was never adequately compensated.

After Cornwallis's surrender, the liberated citizens of New York met and

welcomed General Washington and his soldiers where the fine equestrian statue by Kirke Brown now stands in Union Square. Later Washington made his famous Farewell Address to his officers at historic Fraunces' Tavern, where the meeting calling for a Continental Congress had been held on May 23, 1774.

Fraunces' Tavern was a converted mansion built by Étienne de Lancy, a wealthy Huguenot, in 1719, on land formerly a part of Van Cortlandt manor. It was bought by Samuel Fraunces, a West Indian Creole familiarly known as "Black Sam." His hostelry became famous as a meeting place, and Fraunces himself became steward of the first White House and went with President Washington to Philadelphia and later to Mount Vernon. The present restored building was taken over by the Society of the Sons of the Revolution on December 4, 1907.

New York had been all but ruined by the British occupation and the Great Fires of 1776 and 1778. The population had dwindled from 20,000 to 10,000 by 1783. Thousands of patriots had escaped from the city and many would not return. With the triumph of the American cause, other thousands of British sympathizers had departed, taking with them as much of their wealth as they could. All business was temporarily paralyzed—especially the activities related to shipping.

Yet it was natural for New York again to become the rallying place of the victorious forces of the new nation. When the form of government had been determined by the drafting and ratification of the Constitution, the time finally arrived for the United States, as the world was to know it, to be born. But it is a mistake to jump directly to the spectacular human drama of 1789 and to ignore the pregnant developments that preceded the First Inaugural. The Colonies had found common cause in their fight against the mother country, but the new sovereign states were not yet aware of their continuing dependence one upon the other.

There are striking parallels between the problems confronting the United Nations today and those faced by the United States in the formative stages of its history. There were rivalries, jealousies, and suspicions; sectionalism, separatism, and real conflicts of interest prevailed over a long period. How ways were found to effect a union is of special concern today. The bases of the union were economic, and federation was the mechanism by which mutuality of interest was attained. Americans cannot now disparage the idea of world federation without betraying a lack of faith in their own precepts. Welding a group of sovereign states into a strong federation was a long, heart-breaking task.

Setting up the United Nations so soon after the greatest of wars has been something of a political miracle. It was six years after Yorktown before the Federal government was set up in New York. One of the chapters in the story relates to transportation. To George Washington this was an old problem. As

a young man he had helped cut a road through the mountains to "The Forks," now Pittsburgh. Braddock's Road was the most important project of its kind in colonial America, but Washington had a better idea, growing out of his knowledge of topography, his experiences as an engineer, and his practical business sense. He planned to connect Chesapeake Bay and the Ohio River by a canal, using the Potomac River.

Before the Revolution, Washington had tried to enlist the support of Virginia and Maryland in his scheme. After the Revolution he took it up again where he had left off, urging his Potomac Canal as the most practical way to merge the economic interests of the North and the South, the East and the West. Many able men were trying to bring about a closer union of the states, but it was Washington who found the way. Having advanced his canal project to the point where agreement as to various aspects of navigation was essential, conferences were held at Alexandria and Mount Vernon.

Out of these conferences came the meetings at Annapolis and Philadelphia, where the Constitution had been drafted. New York readily grasped the fundamentals of the problems of the Union. These revolved around trade. The question was whether the former Colonies were to set up barriers to trade between themselves and with other countries that would be as restrictive as those previously imposed on them by the British crown.

New York was already engaged in tariff wars with Connecticut and other near-by states; even Virginia, as well as Rhode Island, refused to permit the Federal government to control customs. Other large issues were pending. The Confederation was without funds and lacked the power to carry on any of the important functions of government. Alexander Hamilton, representing New York, had seized every opportunity to broaden the scope of the early conferences leading to the drafting of the Constitution. With Madison and Jay, he had in "The Federalist" papers presented the classic arguments for the acceptance of the Constitution by the states.

Charles A. Beard declares that the Constitution was conceived and carried through principally by four groups of interests which had been adversely affected under the loose Articles of Confederation—money, public securities, manufactures, trade, and shipping. Hamilton and the other New York leaders had a vital interest in all these activities.¹

Thirteen years after Washington had directed the embarkation of his troops, following the British victory in the important Battle of Long Island, he returned to New York to become head of the New Republic. He was met by a stately barge at Elizabethtown Point, New Jersey, and was rowed across the bay by a special crew of thirteen sea captains, with Captain Thomas Randall as cox-

¹ Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935).

swain. From Murray's wharf, where he landed, he was driven to the Franklin Mansion, on the site of the Manhattan anchorage of Brooklyn Bridge.

From this first "White House," on the morning of April 30, 1789, in a stately coach drawn by six white horses, Washington rode to the remodeled Federal Hall to take office as the first president of the new nation. The Presidential parade, made up of aides and distinguished officials, passed down winding Pearl Street to Wall, thence to the corner of Broad Street. Chancellor Livingston administered the oath on the balcony of Federal Hall. After the President, dressed in brown homespuns, had delivered his inaugural address, he and his government walked the short distance to St. Paul's Chapel, where they attended special religious services. (Trinity Church had been destroyed in the Great Fire of 1776.)

The most pressing problem facing the new government was that of establishing its credit and raising money to pay the nation's debts and finance its activities. For this task Washington selected Alexander Hamilton, whose statesmanship and courage had been fully demonstrated. Hamilton put the Federal government on a firm financial footing, but in the process New York lost its place as the national capital.

The location of a site for the permanent capital was high on the Congressional calendar, and there were many entrants for the honor and its attendant advantages. Geographically New York is on the rim of the continent, as is the District of Columbia; neither of them therefore is a convenient location for the capital of a country that now spreads to the Pacific. But in those early days, when the nation consisted of a façade of states on the Atlantic seaboard and transportation was mainly by water, the choice was necessarily restricted to the areas already developed.

The location of the capital called for a close decision between rival sections. Philadelphia had strong claims, as had Virginia and Maryland, and there were other proposals. New York did not give up easily. Conceding that Manhattan Island did not meet the requirements as to area and topography, efforts were made, nevertheless, to keep the capital near by. Trenton was considered, and L'Enfant actually worked on plans for a capital near Paterson, New Jersey. The Bronx was suggested by hopeful realtors, but the merits of one of the most interesting proposals may be judged by a view from Brooklyn Bridge. With real inspiration the idea was brought forward that the capital of the United States be located on Brooklyn Heights! This proposal should be looked at against the background of 1789, when it was conceded that the capital should be located on the Atlantic Coast and open to the sea, yet not too close to be attacked by enemy vessels.

Brooklyn had all the advantages possessed by New York, and many others of a distinctive character. The New York area had already become the chief center

of shipping and trade and was rapidly gaining in population. The Hudson reached farther into the hinterland than any other stream emptying into the Atlantic, and the Mohawk Valley had already become a main route to the West. The magnificent harbor could be easily defended by forts at the Narrows and on Long Island Sound.

Most impressive of all was the site itself, the great bluff rising above the harbor and dominating all the land and water for miles around. The site was easily accessible yet sufficiently remote to provide the isolation considered desirable in a capital, and there was plenty of room for expansion on Long Island.

There was another thought in the minds of those who advanced this proposal. The Founding Fathers were men of learning and culture, and they were not content to follow the current trends in Europe. Instead, they harked back to the classic age of Greece and Rome for their inspiration. Jefferson and many other leaders were under the spell of classic culture, whose influence was so strong that it led to a classic revival in America before a similar movement got under way in Europe. The architecture of the period reflects this movement, as does the recurrence of classic names in our geography.

The city of Washington, as planned, with its neo-classic architecture and monuments, indicates the kind of capital our forefathers had in mind, but it is located on a comparatively flat terrain. Brooklyn Heights offered an opportunity to revive the Athenian scheme of an Acropolis. It is easy to imagine the present capital located on top of the bluff overlooking the harbor, with a grand array of stately buildings reaching to Prospect Park and the Eastern Parkway ridge, with corresponding developments around the high ground of Fort Greene and "The Hill," and along Shore Drive. But any such magnificent development was rendered impossible by the expediciencies of the day.

George Washington and other Virginians had a different dream. They proposed to connect the Potomac and Ohio rivers by a canal and to make that route the main highway to the West. They wanted to locate the national capital on this route and planned to develop it not merely as the seat of government but as the industrial and commercial center of the nation. The plan also contemplated making the capital on the Potomac the educational, scientific, and cultural center of the country.

These were some of the factors and circumstances underlying the debates over the location of the permanent seat of government, but the issue that forced a decision was of a different nature. A cleavage between the North and South was apparent in the first national election, when Washington was elected President and John Adams, of Massachusetts, Vice-President. The rivalry over the location of the Federal City was intensified when Adams voted for a site in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

When Congress reconvened in January, 1790, some of the southern members

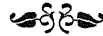
moved to reconsider the Federal City bill. Philadelphia won a partial victory by being made the temporary capital for a decade, but a proposal of the House to place the permanent capital on the easterly bank of the Potomac was lost by a vote of fifteen to nine. The Southerners were offended, and the sectional clash was accentuated by the defeat by a narrow margin of Alexander Hamilton's bill to have the Federal government assume the war debts of the individual states. Hamilton appealed to Jefferson, who also was alarmed by the possibility of a "dissolution of our Union" at this early stage. A compromise was arranged. Two Virginia Congressmen agreed to change their votes on the Assumption bill, and Hamilton promised to secure sufficient northern votes to assure the location of the capital on the Potomac. New York would have lost the capital in any event, but it is significant that Hamilton, a New Yorker, was willing to waive the city's claims and sought the aid of his chief rival, Jefferson, in pressing for a measure which both realized was essential to put the nation on a sound financial basis.

New York was the capital of the Federated States for only twenty months, but what took place during this period was of profound importance not only in the subsequent development of the United States but because of its effect on the future of the new world order. The sequence of events is of special interest now when the United Nations is in process of formation.

After the organizing of the Supreme Court, with John Jay as Chief Justice, Hamilton's reports on finance and industry were submitted and discussed. The first bill passed by the Congress, after the Revenue Act, was one which designated John Lamb as Collector of Customs at New York. Lamb had been a member of the Committee on Correspondence, an opponent of the Stamp Act, and a leader in establishing the compromised "Liberty and Property" pole.

Next came the submission of the Bill of Rights to the states for ratification. Eleven states ratified the ten amendments, and they became law on December 15, 1791. Other measures passed included the first patent and copyright laws (there were many authors in the new government); the purchase of land for the Military Academy at West Point; creation of the Coast Guard; and selection of the permanent capital site on the Potomac. The last act of Congress in New York, the ratification of a Treaty with the Creek Indians, shows that ordinary human rights were not neglected at that busy session.

Chapter Nine



How the City Lost Certain Freedoms

NOT only did New York cease to be the capital of the nation in 1791; it ceased to be capital of the Empire State in 1796, and its political status was severely altered. In the process it lost certain rights it had fought for and long enjoyed under the Dutch States-General and the British crown. Politically New York City is still relatively weaker than it was before the Revolution.

John Montgomery, who became Governor in 1728, confirmed all previous grants and privileges wrung from the Dutch and English, and the Charter of 1730, superseding the Dongan Charter of 1683, went further in giving New York City an independent status. The Montgomery Charter, Section 21, declared:

We [the British sovereign] of our especial grace, certain knowledge and meer notion, have confirmed, given and granted . . . that our said city of New York be, and from henceforth forever shall be and remain a free city of itself. . . .

AND we do further for our Heirs and successors ordain and appoint direct will and grant that all and every person and persons now living who at any time heretofore have been admitted free citizens or into the freedom of the said City of New York shall be and remain free thereof and free citizens have and enjoy the said freedom and all the rights and privileges of freemen and free citizens of the said City of New York to all Intents and purposes whatsoever.

The Common Council, of which the Mayor and Recorder were members, was given full power to make "all such laws, ordinances and constitutions which to them, or the greater part of them, shall seem to be good, useful or necessary for the good rule and government of the body corporate." The members of the Council also exercised judicial powers as justices of the peace

and associate justices of the original Court of Common Pleas of the City and County of New York.

The city obtained its first permanent taxing power, that of levying special assessments for street improvements and drainage purposes, in 1691.¹ Taxes for special purposes were voted only three times in the next fifty years. All other local taxation was in the form of assessments for improvements and of the Poor's Rate, collected by the Church until after the Revolution. Meantime the city's expenses increased, and the corporation petitioned Governor Dongan for the unappropriated lands on Manhattan to the low-water mark. This was granted by the Dongan Charter, and New York became the owner of practically all of what is now the Borough of Manhattan. Potentially New York was now the richest municipality on earth, but the city was "land poor." Later, under the Montgomery Charter, the city received exclusive right to ferriage and marketage, as well as title to the valuable land four hundred feet beyond low water from Charlton Street to the fort and from Whitehall Street to Corlears Hook. By filling in this land, new streets and frontage were added.

At the end of the Revolution, New York City held some 1,100 acres out of a total of about 1,400 acres of land in Manhattan. It also owned a large part of the Brooklyn waterfront. Merely by holding title to its land, leasing or selling it only on condition that it be improved, and assessing the full cost of public improvements on the property benefited, the city could have provided all the facilities needed by the community in future and remained rich and independent. It is perhaps not mere coincidence that the city lost political control over her affairs during the period when she was selling, or virtually giving away, her Common Lands.

Before the Revolution only three cities had corporate status in the province of New York; of these New York and Brooklyn were the largest. Article 34 of the first state constitution (1777) expressly validated and continued the charters granted by the king of Great Britain or his predecessors, and provided specifically for the manner in which the officers of corporations established under such charters should be appointed "until otherwise directed by the Legislature."²

The Legislature thus assumed the powers over cities formerly exercised by royal Governor, under the authority of the Crown. This was logical and inevitable, but it made a great difference to New York City. The first State Constitutional Convention was held in White Plains in July, 1776, and completed its work in Kingston the following April, while the British held New York City. The state constitution was not submitted to the people, and the

¹ George Ashton Black, *The History of Municipal Ownership of Land on Manhattan Island* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1897).

² Howard Lee McBain, *The Law and the Practice of Municipal Home Rule* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916).

state capital was moved from New York to Albany. The city which had formerly ruled the province was thereafter to be ruled by a Legislature sitting 150 miles up the Hudson. This Legislature, during most of its history, has been dominated by interests that were indifferent, if not politically hostile, to that city.

New York was an agricultural state in an agricultural country. As late as 1820 there were only six cities in the country with a 20,000 population. By the middle of the century there were threescore such cities, but only Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Baltimore, and New Orleans had passed the 100,000 mark. Brooklyn had 96,000, but New York had over 500,000 and was almost doubling her population annually.

The state constitution of 1777 retained the colonial practice of having the Governor, on recommendation of the Council of Appointment, appoint the mayors of cities. All other local officials were elective, but the Legislature wanted to hold on to the power and patronage of the city mayors. The constitution of 1821 transferred this power to the common councils, and an amendment in 1833 permitted the election of a mayor in New York City by direct vote of the people.

In the years immediately following the Revolution, political conflicts centered around national issues, with able men taking part on all sides. Over a considerable period New York City's influence in the state government was great, and her representatives in the Legislature, as well as many of the state governors, protected the city's interests, as they saw them. It was not long, however, before definite cleavages developed between the city and upstate New York, and the old battles for political and human rights were resumed. New York City was in the van of the turbulent democratic movement that was destined to throw the Federalists out of power in Washington. This movement was anti-monopoly and against special privilege in all forms. The Legislature was generally more conservative, if not more subservient to special interests, than the city government. This became more marked after the franchise was extended to non-property holders. The city had become the creature of the state, but the people—all classes—finally had the right to vote.

While the state assumed the powers over cities previously exercised by the royal governors, New York City continued for fifty years to enjoy, without serious interference in her affairs on the part of the Legislature, much of the freedom which had been granted by foreign governments during the previous two centuries. But New York was growing at a tremendous rate. To keep up with the increase in population and the expanding activities it was necessary to make all kinds of improvements.

The city required an adequate water supply; soon it would be using gas. Most important of all was transportation. Private companies were eager to

provide these utilities, but they required franchises to use the city streets. The city had jurisdiction over some of its streets, but only the state could authorize a corporation. This was not a new situation, but the opportunities now were much more tempting; there were more of them, and, since most of them were monopolies of one kind or another, promoters were able and willing to pay well for them.

That was the beginning of the era of political spoilsmen and corrupt corporations operating in city halls, in state legislatures, and in Congress. If corruption was more notorious in New York, it was because the opportunities were greater there than elsewhere. New York City's government was to become the worst in the land, but the Legislature was equally corrupt and created the conditions that made much of the city corruption possible. Spoilsmen in City Hall and in Albany were partners, and some of the principals worked in both places. The picture of the city's political degradation and of Albany's domination, however, is not a simple one in black and white. Certainly the city was not the innocent victim of rapacious state legislators.

Legislative interference in the city's affairs took many forms and sprang from various motives. As Mayor Jacob A. Westervelt, an able and honest reform Democrat, said in his annual message of 1854:

Originally possessing powers ample for all possible contingencies, and fully adequate to meet the demands of municipal government, powers conferred on us as a city, and guaranteed as to their permanency and efficiency by the Constitution of our State, and which rendered us actually independent of legislative interference, we have permitted ourselves to be subjected to the control of the State authorities, until, although we stand first among the cities of the Union, we have, in truth, as few powers, and as few rights, as the least of them, and the Legislative action of each year takes from us some powers, and divests us of some rights.

Professor McBain³ points out that Mayor Westervelt was in error in asserting that New York City originally possessed adequate powers and that their permanency was guaranteed by the state constitution. Otherwise the Mayor's complaint was justified in logic. But similar sentiments, expressed by Mayor Fernando Wood in 1855, suggest the other side of the story. With the development of political organizations, and particularly that of Tammany Hall, the municipal government had become increasingly corrupt. These were the days when the city was being systematically robbed by Boss Tweed and his "Boodle Aldermen." Fernando Wood had good reason to protest against Albany "interference" in the city's affairs as he conducted them. Unable to check corruption or to oust the grafters at the polls, reformers and political rivals appealed to Albany for help.

³ *Ibid.*

The men behind the movement to create Central Park met with indifference at City Hall until the project seemed to offer opportunities for graft on a large scale. When the Legislature authorized the park and the spending of \$5,000,000 for it, Mayor Wood tried to have himself and his Commissioner of Public Works put in charge of the work and the spending of the money. It was to circumvent this move that the Legislature was prevailed upon to appoint a special commission, independent of the city, to do the work.

Although the motives in the case were good and the procedure followed was fully justified by the results, it set a precedent that produced many abuses. To avoid direct interference with regularly elected city officials, the Legislature began transferring control of important city functions to state commissions. This practice was based on the state constitution of 1846, which provided that city officers generally should be elected, but added: "*All other officers whose election or appointment is not provided for by this Constitution, and all officers whose offices may hereafter be created by law, shall be elected by the people or appointed, as the Legislature may direct.*"

New York's Police Department was notoriously corrupt and inefficient under Fernando Wood, and in 1857 the Legislature created the Metropolitan Police District, with boundary lines corresponding approximately to the present boundaries of Greater New York. In the riots and confusion arising over this innovation, Wood acted as the defender of the city against the state. As in the case of Central Park, there was a certain justification for the drastic action taken, but it led to amazing extremes. Several other police districts were created in the state, and the Albany Police District was stretched to include Troy and Schenectady, with the right of way of the New York Central Railroad as the connecting link!

Having started on this path, the Legislature did not stop until it had set up a Metropolitan Sanitary District to perform various health functions in New York City, a Metropolitan Board of Excise, a Metropolitan Elections District, and a Metropolitan Fire District. Because the functions were new or had not been established by law, the state created commissioners of record, a Commission of Jurors in Kings County, a Board of Examiners of building certificates, commissioners to assess special functions, and a Superintendent of Elections. Since authority to open streets in the northern part of Manhattan had never been specifically conferred on the Common Council, this function was given to the Commissioners of Central Park—who did a good job—but the Croton aqueduct was taken over by special state officials because the aqueduct had merely been authorized by ordinance.

The extent to which New York City had lost control over her affairs was indicated in the State Constitutional Convention of 1867-68, when it was declared that \$7 out of every \$8 disbursed in the city went to officials under state

authorization and in no way responsible to the people of the city. Reforms were proposed in the state constitution submitted in 1868-69 but defeated at the polls. In 1877 the Evarts Commission was appointed to devise a plan for the government of the cities. The Commission found that three-fourths of the laws of 1870 were concerned with local affairs. As a result of Albany's attempts to legislate for the cities the utmost confusion reigned. Chief Justice Church declared: "It is scarcely safe for anyone to speak confidently of the exact condition of the law in respect to public improvements in the cities of New York and Brooklyn. The enactments in reference thereto have been modified, superseded, and repealed so often and to such an extent that it is difficult to ascertain just what statutes are in force at any particular time."

The Evarts Commission in its report summed up the situation as follows:

It may be true that the first attempts to secure legislative intervention in the local affairs of our principal cities were made by good citizens in the supposed interest of reform of good government, and to counteract the schemes of corrupt officials. The notion that legislative control was the proper remedy was a serious mistake. The corrupt cliques and rings thus sought to be baffled were quick to perceive that in the business of procuring special laws concerning local affairs, they could easily out-match the fitful and clumsy labors of disinterested citizens.

The transfer of the control of the municipal resources from the localities to the capital had no other effect than to cause a like transfer of the methods and arts of corruption, and to make the fortunes of our principal cities the traffic of the lobbies. Municipal corruption, previously confined within territorial limits, thenceforth escaped all bounds, and spread to every quarter of the State. Cities were compelled by legislation to buy land for parks and places because the owners wanted to sell them; compelled to grade, pave and sewer streets without inhabitants, and for no other purpose than to award corrupt contracts for the work. Cities were compelled to purchase at the public expense and at extravagant prices, the property necessary for streets and avenues, useless for any other purpose than to make a market for the adjoining property thus improved. Laws were enacted abolishing one office and creating another with the same duties, in order to transfer official emoluments from one man to another; and laws to change the functions of officers with a view only to a new distribution of patronage, and to lengthen the terms of offices, for no other purpose than to retain in place officers who could not otherwise be elected or appointed.

If anyone questions the mischievous results of these practices he has but to note the increase of debt and taxation in the City of New York from 1860 to the present time, during which legislative intervention in the local affairs of that city has been most extensively asserted. The debt has increased from \$18,000,000 to \$113,000,000, and taxation for annual expenditures from \$9,000,000 to \$28,000,000.

Nothing came of the Evarts Commission's recommendations, and the old provisions were continued in the state constitution of 1894. From 1884 to 1889

there were 390 acts relating exclusively to New York City. Under a general law in 1854 the franchise rights in New York streets were fair and reasonable, but under special legislative grants after 1860 public rights were disregarded and private interests were favored so scandalously that the situation became intolerable. As a result of protests, a constitutional amendment was adopted in 1874 requiring local consent for such grants. It was ten years, however, before a general law was passed to carry out the purpose of the amendment. In the meantime all the important franchises had been granted.

Under the spell of the power of constitutions and of a belief that the cure of all evils was to be had by writing fundamental laws, the state constitution of 1821 had provided that "the assent of two-thirds of the members elected to each branch of the Legislature shall be requisite to every bill . . . creating, continuing, altering or renewing any body politic or corporate." The provision was aimed at chartering banks, insurance companies, and private corporations, but cities were not exempted and this gave them a measure of protection so far as their charters were concerned, though it did not inhibit special legislation.

The first definite step toward reform came with the adoption of the state constitution of 1894, which classified the cities on the basis of population and required that laws affecting the cities must, after adoption, be submitted to the respective mayors and councils, who are required, after public hearings, to approve or reject them. If rejected, the bill may be re-enacted without the necessity of an extraordinary majority vote. This suspensive veto upon special laws relating to its government has been highly beneficial to New York City.

Although legislative interference was gradually lessened, opportunities for independent, constructive action were slow in developing. What was most needed by the city was the power to make its own charter. For this power New York had to wait forty years after the Mayor's veto was granted in 1894. Between 1911 and 1921, 1,700 local laws affecting New York City were passed in Albany. A digest of such laws, compiled by the New York City Charter Commission in 1921, covered 1,300 pages of small type.

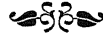
The Home Rule Amendment, adopted in 1923, came from a movement started in 1910 by a group of civic organizations and the State Conference of Mayors and Other Officials. It was a long, hard fight. A slight gain was made in 1913 with the passage of the Municipal Empowering Act. The next year, the Optional Form of Government Act was passed. The State Constitutional Convention of 1915 adopted an amendment that would have permitted a larger measure of home rule, but the proposed constitution was defeated at the polls.

The Home Rule proposal was revised and brought out again in 1916, and in 1917 the State Association was formed to work for the reform. By 1922 there were signs of progress, but the legislators wanted to eliminate city control over the county officers in New York City. Organized labor was opposed at

first, but its objections were overcome and it later supported the measure. The public utilities were opposed, but they were not active because they were excluded from city control. In the final stages of the battle the real estate interests were the most vigorous opponents. The president of the United Realty Owners Association declared: "The popular vote in large cities is emotional and un-reasoning. The people must be saved from themselves." He feared the horrors of "free dentistry, free ocular, free drugs, free medical advice and like . . . fads and fancies."

In the November election of 1923, the Home Rule Amendment was carried by a vote of 957,108 for and 510,947 against. Fifteen years were to pass before New York City was to live under a new charter of her own making, but the city had recovered some of the powers of self-government she had enjoyed as a provincial capital.

Chapter Ten



Government by Men as Well as Laws

NEW YORK'S political history since the Revolution is one of striking contrasts—appalling corruption on the one hand, and on the other displays of civic righteousness and indignation that would do justice to religious zealots. Yet running through the long story is a definite urge toward greater freedom and a more enlightened and efficient government.

When the Bill of Rights was adopted in New York, manhood suffrage existed in only three of the new states; imprisonment for debt was general, and public whippings and other cruel punishments were customary. Only property owners could vote, and city mayors were appointed by the Governor and his Council of Appointment, consisting of four state senators. In New York the continuing struggle for greater freedom was at first directed toward securing political rights for all.

In 1789, when the Federal government was established, New York City's government was in conservative hands, but anti-Federalists were numerous. William Mooney, an ex-corporal who had a holstery shop in Nassau Street, was opposed to centralization of power; he also wanted the common soldiers to have an organization comparable to the Order of the Cincinnati, which Hamilton and other officers had formed. Mooney and a like-minded group formed the Society of St. Tammany on May 12, 1789, the year Washington was first inaugurated. Washington himself, in his second administration, issued a warning against such organizations, which had become increasingly active in politics. It was not long, however, before Aaron Burr was using the Society of St. Tammany, which soon became known as the Republican party—afterwards the Republican-Democratic party, and finally the Democratic party. This was the beginning of political parties as we know them.

The Federal government was conservative, and the local Federalists were headed by Alexander Hamilton. If Tammany was to control the city it was

necessary for it to dominate the Governor's Council of Appointments, and this was rendered difficult because of a feud between Aaron Burr and Governor George Clinton. The Governor used his power over the Council to have his nephew, DeWitt Clinton, appointed Mayor in 1803. The nephew was a superior young man, a graduate of Columbia (formerly King's) College, and at the age of 34 a United States Senator.

DeWitt Clinton was a scribe of the Society of St. Tammany, but before long conflicts began to develop. One of these centered around William Mooney, the society's organizer, who had become superintendent of the Almshouse at \$1,000 a year, with an additional \$510 for supplies. A scandal occurred when Mooney was shown to have appropriated \$500 in cash and about \$1,000 worth of supplies. The clashes between Clinton and the organization were accentuated during the embargo and in the course of the War of 1812. Tammany was all for war. Many of its members had received recognition from Madison, and events had given them a chance to capitalize on their patriotic stand and to bring many Federalists into their camp. By 1815 the anti-Federalists had secured control of the state and had removed DeWitt Clinton as Mayor, although the Federalists still controlled the City Council.

In 1820 Tammany renominated Daniel L. Tompkins for Governor after he had been accused of defaulting to the extent of \$200,000. Clinton, who had become champion of the Erie Canal project and enjoyed heavy support in New York City, opposed Tompkins and won, largely on the canal issue. Tammany now praised Clinton and made excuses for his removal as Mayor on the grounds of political necessity. But the Legislature was recaptured by Tammany on the issue of universal manhood suffrage, and it was Tammany that called the State Constitutional Convention of 1821 which abolished imprisonment for debt. The Democrats were embarrassed by a scandal over the Chemical Bank charter, but in 1827 they gained control of the city government and carried New York for Jackson by 5,000 votes, in an election that reeked of wholesale frauds on the part of both sides.

The record for the next fifty years is characterized almost continuously by scandal both at City Hall and in Albany. The alliance between grafting politicians and corporations was an open fact, and the only check on the robbery they practiced came from rival promoters and spoilsmen. In the 1830s it was charged that Democratic as well as Whig nominations were made in Wall Street. After the fire in 1835 the Council voted a \$8,000,000 loan to banks, while speculators raised flour to \$12 a barrel and the poor were on the verge of starvation. Insurance companies issued bonds for several times their capitalization. The Bank of the Manhattan Company lent Tammany leaders \$1,344,266 in 1840. Banks and utilities were under-assessed by \$30,000,000 in 1846.

Utility franchises and wild-cat charters were the special game at Albany. It

cost the promoters \$50,000 to secure a franchise for the Eighth and Ninth Avenue Railroads; the Third Avenue cost \$30,000. Meanwhile the Broadway franchise went to Jacob Sharp, although others had offered the city \$100,000 annually and \$100 per car for the use of the street. The Fulton Ferry Company had a monopoly for almost twenty years, the Council refusing to let in competitors, although there was a great need for more ferries and better service.

The Equal Rights party split the Democrats in 1837 and the Whigs won. Tammany also felt the effects of the panic, but it came back in power in 1839. From 1840 to 1854 Tammany was under the influence of Wall Street, but the wealthy men were driven into the Whig camp after the Democrats had turned to recruiting voters among the immigrants who were streaming ashore during this period.

The Whigs were opposed to naturalizing the foreigners, but Tammany organized a bureau for this purpose. A card reading "Please naturalize bearer" was all that was necessary to create a new Tammany voter. There was no registration of voters until 1840, and election frauds were the rule. Before the property qualification for voters was abolished, the politicians gave innumerable persons small shares in empty lots so that they could vote. A new registration law, passed in 1859, called for bi-partisan election boards. Tammany bought Republicans for \$2,500 and appointed 70 or 80 Republicans out of 609 members of the supposedly bi-partisan body.

The immigrant vote created splits in the Democratic ranks. Tammany, started as a patriotic society, had in it intolerant elements which opposed the newcomers. The Know-Nothing—or Nativists—movement attracted some of the Democrats. They wanted to keep aliens out of office and out of jobs, and their hostility was especially directed toward Catholic immigrants. Many factions developed as a result of these internal wars—Barnburners, Hunkers, Hard Shells, Soft Shells, and Locofocos—the last receiving their name from the new kind of self-lighting match, a novelty being displayed on Nassau Street, which was used to relight a hall after it had been darkened by a rival faction.

Fernando Wood was Tammany's first candidate to attain the Mayoralty. Nominated but defeated, in 1850, Wood was finally elected in 1854—partly because of a reaction against the Nativist movement—and re-elected in 1856 and 1858. At one time he broke with Tammany and started Mozart Hall as a rival institution. He also broke with the moneyed classes and made himself a champion of the people. Following the panic of 1857 the poor were provided with food at cost, and Harlem Rail Road improvements were started to provide work, but Wood made himself a dictator, named friends to jobs, and assumed personal control of the police and other city departments. It was during this period that the Legislature created the Metropolitan Police District to replace Wood's personal police force. It was shown later that Wood sold the Street

Commissionership to Charles Devlin for \$50,000 and that Devlin let contracts to himself and cleared approximately \$200,000.

Wood bought land from people who did not own it and secured the support of newspapers by giving them advertising. He ended his feud with Tammany while still in office and became its leader. In 1861 twenty-two unnecessary offices were created at a cost to taxpayers of \$250,000. He received \$50,000 from a gas company for rights to the streets and had the distinction of auctioning City Hall for \$50,000 to pay a fraudulent claim. During the Civil War, Wood charged that the conflict was a Republican graft scheme and proposed that New York City secede from the Union.

Wood's leadership in Tammany was followed by that of William Tweed, who had been a member of the Council in 1851 when it became known as the "Forty Thieves." Tweed went to Congress in 1852 and in 1857 was a member of the Board of Supervisors; he became Deputy Street Commissioner in 1863 and was a State Senator at the same time.

Tweed's special lieutenants were Richard B. Connolly, Peter E. Sweeney, and Andrew J. Garvey. Sweeney paid \$60,000 for the office of City Chamberlain, which about doubled Wood's price. The Sheriff under Tweed recouped \$150,000, the Register pocketed \$70,000 a year. Tammany controlled the judges, and under the Adjusted Claims Act the money collected was divided between the ring and Tammany.

Up in Albany, Tweed's "Black Horse Cavalry" dominated the Legislature, and the big game was the public service corporations. As a director of the Erie Railroad, Tweed collected \$650,000 in three months. In a few years he had accumulated \$12,000,000. At his trial in 1873, Tweed testified that he had bought five state senators for \$40,000 each. Perhaps the boldest of Tweed's schemes was the adoption of a new city charter which cost \$1,000,000 and was specially drawn to increase opportunities for graft.

Every effort to stop the wholesale thievery came to little until 1870. Matthew J. O'Rourke, a New York County bookkeeper, secured much of the evidence used so effectively by the *New York Times* in exposing the Tweed Ring. One specific count was that \$10,000,000 of the \$12,000,000 spent on the new County Court House—still standing back of City Hall in 1948—went to the ring as graft.

On September 4, 1870, a mass meeting was held in Cooper Union, and a Committee of Seventy was formed to fight the corruptionists at the polls and in the courts. Tammany won the election by fraud and brutality. The Grand Jury was "packed," but Mayor Oakley Hall was indicted. Despite the influence of Tammany in the courts, Tweed was gradually shorn of his power. He was tried, convicted, and sent to prison for twelve years. Released by the Court of Appeals on a technicality after a year, he was rearrested in a series of civil suits

and held in \$3,000,000 bail, but he was allowed to escape to Spain. When he was arrested and returned to New York again in 1876, a judgment for \$6,000,000 was found against him, but his property had been transferred to his son and he went to jail, where he died.

Peter Sweeney was permitted to settle for \$400,000. Garvey turned state's evidence and went to Europe, where he died, leaving \$600,000. Connolly also fled to Europe, with the tidy sum of \$6,000,000. Some of the lesser grafters were jailed. Estimates place the cost to New York City of the Tweed Ring at \$200,000,000.

"Honest" John Kelly, who succeeded Tweed as leader of Tammany, had been an alderman and a member of the ring, as well as Grand Sachem of the society. After serving a term as sheriff, Kelly broke with Tweed because the latter had not advanced him to higher office. A revolt ensued among the Irish faction in Tammany, and Kelly was nominated for Mayor. But he declined and sailed for Europe. It was said that Tweed had paid him to leave; in any case, he did not return until the ring was breaking up.

Shrewd and resourceful, Kelly undertook to rehabilitate Tammany in public esteem by putting up able and respectable men for office. He supported Horatio Seymour, Samuel J. Tilden, and Sanford E. Church. For mayor he nominated Abraham Lawrence, who had been a member of the Committee of Seventy, but his candidate was defeated. In 1874 Kelly selected William H. Wickham, who also had been on the Committee of Seventy. Much unemployment and discontent had followed the panic of 1873, and Kelly's man won.

It was said of Kelly that he "found Tammany a horde and left it a political army," but he made some serious mistakes. One was his break with Samuel J. Tilden in 1879, when he opposed Tilden's candidate for Governor and had himself nominated. This split the Democratic ranks and helped in electing a Republican, and it brought the rival faction, the County Democracy, into power in City Hall. Three years later Kelly bitterly opposed Cleveland, of whom General Bragg of Wisconsin said at the Convention of 1884, "We love him for the enemies he has made." Cleveland's election and that of William R. Grace as Mayor of New York were a severe blow to Kelly. Physically he was near collapse, and he died not long afterwards.

Richard Croker, who succeeded Kelly as leader of Tammany in 1885, had long been Kelly's lieutenant. Equally shrewd, Croker was more tactful and of a more amiable temper than Kelly, and he got a good break in 1886, when members of the County Democracy became involved in the aldermanic scandals. It was not long, however, before Tammany was again shown to be deeply involved in corruption. Dr. Parkhurst had begun his sensational exposure of vice; in this he was backed by Platt, the Republican boss, and a legislative investigation was authorized.

Although Governor Flower had vetoed the expense bill, the Lexow Investigation got started in 1894, with \$17,500 provided by the Chamber of Commerce, and was soon revealing the partnership between the police and organized prostitution and gambling. Grant was Mayor at the time, and when public indignation reached a high level of intensity Croker resigned as Tammany leader and went abroad.

One of the ablest Mayors of New York before its consolidation was Abram S. Hewitt, Peter Cooper's son-in-law and a reformer. Hewitt served only a single term, beginning in 1887. He was an honest administrator, but he was defeated in efforts to bring about fundamental changes and aroused the Irish by refusing to fly the Irish flag at City Hall on St. Patrick's Day.

The Committee of Seventy, which had ousted Tweed, came back to life in 1894, and the fusionists named William L. Strong, an independent Republican, for Mayor. Strong was elected by a plurality of over 45,000, along with practically the entire Fusion ticket. Mayor Strong's administration was in many ways the best New York City had experienced in the century since the Revolution. To assure an honest and efficient Police Department, which was the great weakness in the city government, Mayor Strong named young Theodore Roosevelt as Police Commissioner. Colonel George E. Waring, Jr., was made head of the Street Cleaning Department, and other appointments were of a high order. Strong greatly improved the highways and initiated many other betterments.

That an administration made up of men of such high caliber should have quickly lost favor with the public may seem strange, but it is easily explained. One of the chief causes of the revolt against Strong was resentment against his strict enforcement of existing laws against Sunday liquor selling and gambling. Upstate legislators had passed drastic laws that were incompatible with city customs. Revolt against the dry laws had helped Fernando Wood to win his election in 1854. Strong merely enforced the laws as they stood, but he aroused bitter opposition. In the words of a practical city politician, "It [the Dry Law] got between the people and its beer." The Raines Law provided that only hotels could serve liquors on Sunday. As a result most saloons became "hotels," with sandwiches nailed to tables in back rooms and the upper rooms turned into quarters for prostitutes and gamblers.

In other ways the reform administration was disappointing to its supporters. Sydney Brooks, writing on "Tammany Again," in *The Fortnightly Review* of London in December, 1903, said:

The reformers set their standard high—and by that standard they are judged. The promised reforms are long-a-coming, and when they do come they are not always seen to work quite smoothly. Up goes an instantaneous howl of impatience and disappointment from the reforming press, and of

derision from Tammany. Moreover, no reform administration has yet mastered the secret (which Tammany so perfectly understands) of "team play."¹

What the enemies of reform thought of the Strong administration is indicated by the following:

Tammany serves notice it has started a relentless warfare against the "reform" cabal, which will not end till that cabal is exterminated, root and branch, and New York City is redeemed from its domination. This ignorant set has made New York ridiculous in the eyes of the world, presenting the picture of Hypocrisy arm-in-arm with the ghost of assumed Virtue; watching Hope die in the arms of official Incompetence.²

Opposition to the reformers was intensified by their machinations at Albany. With the aid of the Republicans, legislation had been passed changing mayoralty elections to off-years. This gave Mayor Strong an extra year in office and was supposed to strengthen Republicans in the city. The Greater New York bill, which had also passed, was expected to help the Republicans, since Brooklyn, Queens, and Richmond were normally Republican. Tammany Hall was not in favor of the consolidation of the city, but Boss Platt had the votes in Albany. The charter of 1897 would give the next Mayor more power over Greater New York than any Mayor of the city had ever had, besides the huge patronage and other opportunities. This was the situation when William C. Whitney and Hugh J. Grant visited Croker, who had been abroad for three years, and induced him to return to lead Tammany. Croker arrived in New York in September, 1897, and quickly took over the reins at Tammany Hall on the eve of the momentous election.

As Tammany's candidate for Mayor, Croker named Judge Robert Van Wyck, a member of an old Dutch family, who had an undistinguished record but was a faithful organization man. The Citizens' Union fusion candidate was Seth Low, then president of Columbia University. Mr. Low was a Republican who had served as Fusion Mayor of Brooklyn in 1882-85. Republican politicians, distrustful of Low, named Benjamin F. Tracy as their candidate. The fourth candidate was Henry George, the Single Taxer, who had the support of the "Jeffersonian Democrats," made up of Laborites and Bryan Democrats.

It was a sensational campaign. Asa Bird Gardiner, the Tammany candidate for District Attorney in New York County, coined the slogan "To Hell With Reform!" and this became the rallying cry of the Democratic organization. Because of the split in the Democratic ranks, Henry George seemed to have a good chance of winning. Seth Low was not a dramatic campaigner, and the

¹ Quoted by Lothrop Stoddard in *Master of Manhattan, the Life of Richard Croker* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1931).

² *Ibid.*

Republican machine lacked enthusiasm for him. Henry George died suddenly in the midst of the campaign and was replaced by his son. Van Wyck won by a vote of 233,997. Low received 151,540, Tracy 101,864, and George 21,693 votes.

Tammany celebrated its victory in riotous fashion. Night-long parades chanted the refrain, "Well, well, well! Reform has gone to Hell!" Van Wyck, who was to rule Greater New York for four years, promptly announced that he would "Put None But Democrats on Guard," and he and Croker established ostentatious headquarters in Lakewood, New Jersey, to decide which Democrats were to be selected as guards of Tammany's interests. While abroad, Croker had achieved a style of living that amazed his cohorts. Evening dress was mandatory at the Lakewood dinners, and the Democratic Club replaced Tammany Hall as the headquarters where Croker held court.³

Croker did not attend the Van Wyck inaugural, but he arranged a banquet on Jefferson's Birthday in 1899 to celebrate the victory. The Metropolitan Opera House was taken over for the affair and transformed into a tiered banquet hall. There were thirty-two tables on the main floor, 39th and 40th Streets were closed, and covers for twelve hundred dinners were laid in the open. About ten thousand quarts of wine, including three thousand of champagne, were consumed.

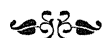
New York under Van Wyck became a wide-open town. William S. Devery as Chief of Police took over the vice graft; Tim Sullivan was more particularly interested in gambling; and the lesser leaders and office holders found other fields for profitable operations. Croker himself went after bigger game in Wall Street and at Albany.

It is ironic that Little Old New York, which had contributed so much to political liberty, ended its existence in such an orgy of political degradation. But there is another side to the picture. The old town was to become absorbed in the larger community which it had created. There was no diminution of civic virtue; it was merely spread over a larger area. Greater New York was to have its own scandals, but in the evolution of the democratic process there was to be a steady improvement in local government.

³ *Ibid.*

Part Three: » A FREE CITY
IN A FREE COUNTRY

Chapter Eleven



The Father of Greater New York

THE creation of Greater New York was the work of many men, extending over a long period and actuated by mixed motives. Schemers sought political or material advantage from the consolidation, and much of the opposition was similarly motivated. But there were leaders of a different caliber arrayed on both sides.

Having established a municipal government that was regarded as a model for the country, many high-minded Brooklynites were opposed to merging their city with New York and subjecting it to the control of the notoriously corrupt Tammany organization. Leaders in other communities in the area had the same fears. But a few men of vision foresaw the future of the growing city and sought to guide and facilitate its development. To them greater unity seemed essential and inevitable.

Such a man was Andrew Haswell Green, who has rightly been called the "Father of Greater New York."¹ Born in Malden, Massachusetts, on October 6, 1820, of old New England stock, Green came to New York in 1835 and got a job as errand boy in a store. He held several positions in his early days and at nineteen began to study law. From the first he took a lively interest in public affairs. He was sworn in as an attorney in 1846 and formed a close personal and political relationship with Samuel J. Tilden; he became a school commissioner, then a member and later president of the Board of Education. Green was particularly interested in school finances and taxes and early sought more state aid for city schools. Public confidence in him increased and his civic interests broadened as he gave more and more time to civic problems.

Andrew H. Green's most important single public contribution, aside from his work for consolidation of the city, was the creation of Central Park. The

¹ Material relating to Mr. Green is largely from John Foord, *The Life and Public Services of Andrew Haswell Green* (New York: Doubleday-Page Co., 1913).

commissioners who drew up the Street Plan of 1811 were convinced that New York, with rivers on both sides, need not waste land on parks. This mistake was early recognized, and agitation for a great new city park was started in 1850 by Andrew J. Downing in *The Horticulturist*. The following year Mayor Kingsland advocated a park reservation north of City Hall, and the Legislature authorized the acquisition of land.

The Act of July 11, 1851, authorized the acquisition of a tract known as Jones' Woods on the East River between 66th and 75th Streets and extending westward to Park Avenue. Opposition to this location helped to crystallize sentiment in favor of the Central Park site. The Council asked the Legislature to take no further action on the east-side park, but its advocates continued their campaign. They chartered a steamboat in 1853 and took members of the Legislature and members of the Chamber of Commerce to visit the site. President Pierce was a guest of the party.²

The Common Council, on June 8, 1853, asked the Legislature to authorize the opening of a park bounded on the east and west by Fifth and Eighth Avenues and running from 63rd to 100th Street. The Legislature, with fine impartiality, passed two laws, one for the East River site and the other for a park from 59th to 106th Streets between Fifth and Eighth Avenues. The Jones' Woods Act was repealed the next year.

The Common Council named Mayor Fernando Wood and Street Commissioner Joseph S. Taylor as Commissioners for Central Park and appropriated over \$5,000,000 for the improvement. Fernando Wood was notoriously corrupt, as was most of the local government. Indeed, conditions in the city had become so bad that the Legislature began to curtail the powers of the local authorities. In 1857 a law was passed creating a Board of Commissioners of eleven persons to regulate and govern Central Park. Andrew H. Green was a member of this first board, and first served as treasurer; within a year he became president. By this time it was apparent that directing the park work was a full-time job. Mr. Green was made Park Comptroller, and he engaged Frederick Law Olmsted as superintendent. With Calvert Vaux, Mr. Olmsted won the competition for the plan of the park. Mr. Green early raised the question of extending the park to 110th Street. This was done by an act of the Legislature in 1859.

Mr. Green's subsequent interest in public improvements grew out of his experience in park development. Through his initiative and insistence, Seventh Avenue was widened to 150 feet and developed as a shaded driveway and promenade from 46th Street north, providing access to Central Park and an unobstructed avenue which, with Broadway, would reach from the Battery to the free bridge over the Harlem River at McComb's Dam. Under Mr. Green,

² One objection to the East River location was that it might incite crime, since it would be easy to push people or bodies into the deep swift current.

the park's Board of Commissioners gained such public confidence that its powers were extended. He was authorized to lay out the northern end of Manhattan Island; to survey and lay out the lower part of Westchester County; to devise plans for the improvement of the Harlem River and Spuyten Duyvil Creek and for the construction of bridges over these streams; to establish bulkhead lines on the North River north of 55th Street; and to survey and lay out the undeveloped portions of the island west of Eight Avenue and south of 155th Street.

During August and September, 1868, Green went abroad to study the parks and other features of European cities. Paris, London, Berlin and other cities were expanding and being replanned. None was growing faster than New York. Mr. Green returned with plenty of ideas, but he encountered formidable opposition. Boss Tweed was operating in Albany as well as in New York, and the so-called "Tweed Charter" of 1870 took the control of Central Park away from the original commission. Mr. Green was reappointed as treasurer of the new board, but Peter B. Sweeney, Tweed's lieutenant, became president. Sweeney had also been to Paris and learned of the immense profits to be made from public improvements.

Green resigned as treasurer of the board within a month but remained as a member till May, 1873. He became acting City Comptroller and later Comptroller, in 1871. In this position he was able to frustrate the politicians and speculators by slowing down the projects he had initiated. Later Tweed became head of the Department of Public Works besides holding other jobs. It is interesting to note that the original estimated cost of Riverside Drive was \$1,400,000, but the Tweed gang bought up the land in advance and ran the cost up to \$6,000,000.

For five years Green was in the Comptroller's Office. After the 1873 election he was the only reformer in a position to oppose the gang of thieves in power. He refused to pay money to the grafters and resisted efforts to oust him. The *New York Times*, in its fight against Tweed, backed Green and wanted him to run for Mayor. He declined because he did not wish to injure the chances of his friend Tilden, who was the Democratic candidate for the Presidency. Green organized and promoted the movement for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Natural History, and the Zoological Gardens, but his main interest was in unifying the sprawling metropolitan area.

In a communication to William A. Booth in September, 1874, Mr. Green reviewed the status of city improvements and urged the consideration of projects which would serve a larger area than Manhattan Island. His report in 1868 had emphasized that the City of New York had originally extended to the low-water mark on opposite shores. New York owned the waterfront in Brooklyn and controlled the ferries, and there were many disputes with New Jersey and Westchester.

The powers of the Police and Health boards had been extended to cover Westchester, Kings, and Richmond counties, but the police had to enforce different excise regulations at the different ends of the Harlem River bridges. An essential part of the plans of the Commissioners of Central Park was the incorporation of the lower part of Westchester, including Morrisania, West Farms, and Kingsbridge and Fordham. This was done in 1874, thus adding 12,500 acres to the 14,000 acres of the City of New York.

That was the first concrete step toward expansion, but communications were poor. Mr. Green repeatedly urged more bridges and tunnels over and under the Harlem and East rivers, as well as continuous roads into adjacent territory. As early as 1868 Green had declared that the political union of Brooklyn and New York was inevitable. Long before Brooklyn Bridge was opened, Green was urging more East River bridges. He was not the originator of the idea of consolidation, but he was its most persistent and effective advocate. He not only argued for the consolidation of the city; he worked out the details, mapped the strategy, and battled increasingly to overcome the obstacles.

Brooklyn was a separate city after 1834, and it had absorbed Williamsburgh and Bushwick in 1856, but there was no marked opposition there to the Metropolitan Police and Excise Acts and similar legislation relating to the Fire and Health departments of New York and Brooklyn adopted in 1857. In fact, Cyrus P. Smith, a State Senator from Kings County, introduced a bill aimed at the consolidation of Greater New York in 1856. The Tweed Charter of 1870, restoring the police and other services to the two cities, was a new obstacle disguised as a home-rule measure.

In 1868, Mr. Green had directed attention in his report to the important subject of bringing the City of New York, Kings and Richmond counties, a part of Westchester, and Queens, including the various suburbs within a certain radial distance from the center of the city, under one common municipal government, to be arranged in departments under a single executive head. At first Mr. Green confined his arguments to the need for joint action to secure improvements that would benefit the entire metropolitan area. He did not emphasize the political aspects, and he proposed that at the outset only a few existing officials be disturbed. He realized that the process of unification would be a long one and would require a great deal of education.

Improved transportation was the great need of the times. Brooklyn Bridge was under construction, but it was not until May 24, 1883, that this structure was opened. Incidentally, the fact that it was opened on Queen Victoria's Birthday caused the Irish to boycott the celebration. By this time Brooklyn had 599,495 inhabitants, and New York's population was 1,164,673. Brooklyn Bridge, by physically uniting the two principal communities of the area did more than anything else to make consolidation inevitable, but by bringing about

a tremendous increase in Brooklyn's population it also intensified the rivalry between the two cities and made political union more difficult.

A second East River bridge was being planned at the time Brooklyn Bridge was opened. Long Island City and Richmond were demanding more and better ferries. More bridges over the Harlem River were needed, and all sections clamored for more highways and other improvements. The rapid growth of population and the development of various means of transportation, including elevated railroads, strengthened Mr. Green's conviction that the only solution of the problems of the New York district was political union. In 1889 he prepared a bill calling for a commission to study and report on the consolidation; this was introduced in the Assembly by Ernest H. Crosley. The bill passed the Assembly but was defeated in the Senate through the efforts of Brooklyn opponents. In 1890 Mr. Green addressed a memorial to the legislature which was a model of its kind, marshalling all the arguments in favor of unification.

Largely as a result of Mr. Green's efforts, the Legislature passed—and Governor David B. Hill signed—on May 8, 1890, "An act to create a commission to inquire into the expediency of consolidating the various municipalities in the State of New York occupying the several islands in the harbor of New York." (Laws of 1890, Chapter 311.) Mr. Green became a member of this commission and was elected its president. The commission unanimously decided to recommend consolidation, and on March 22, 1891, Green was requested to prepare a bill; it was introduced in the two chambers on April 7, but it made no progress.

On January 1, 1892, the commission again presented to the Legislature a bill providing for consolidation. This bill, like its predecessor, met with turbulent opposition and was tabled. Undeterred, Mr. Green and the commission continued to hold meetings, to combat opposition, and to win supporters. Much of the opposition came from office-holding politicians in Brooklyn, but counter-measures against them were adopted. The Consolidation League, formed in Brooklyn in 1893, helped elect some senators and assemblymen favorable to the consolidation of the city. The commission in 1892 prepared a bill providing for a referendum on the desirability of consolidation. The bill was defeated, but it was later reintroduced under more favorable conditions and passed and signed by Governor Roswell P. Flower. The referendum was held on November 6, 1894.

An address, signed by Andrew Green as president and by J. S. T. Stranahan of Brooklyn as vice-president, made a stirring appeal to the voters. After explaining the purposes and advantages of unification, the address declared: "The name of a great city is a tower of strength. There is no good reason why this great community should not have the benefit of such prestige. Magnitude is not a thing of vapory dimensions, but a solid, substantial and a determining

factor, of which it would be folly to deny ourselves the advantage in important issues.”

The referendum in 1894 was merely an expression of opinion, but it is revealing in connection with the final act of unification. Consolidation was more than a merging of existing units; it was expansion planned on a grand scale. That the possibilities and practical political limits were carefully calculated is shown by the vote. New York's population was spreading northward at a rapid rate, and lower Westchester—including the towns of Eastchester, Pelham, and Westchester, as well as the villages of Wakefield and Williamsbridge—were annexed in 1895, adding 13,500 acres to New York City. Yonkers and Mount Vernon were not so closely linked with Manhattan, nor were Flushing, Jamaica, and the scattered settlements in Queens. That the boundaries of Greater New York generally conformed to the will of a majority of the voters in the large area at the time is indicated by the vote in the referendum, which was as follows:

New York: for, 96,938; against, 59,959. Kings: for, 64,744; against, 64,467. Queens: for, 7,712; against, 4,741. Richmond: for, 5,531; against, 1,505. Mount Vernon: for 833; against, 1,603. Westchester: for, 620; against, 621. Pelham: for, 251; against, 153.

Within these areas the only districts voting against consolidation were Mount Vernon, the town of Westchester, and the Township of Flushing, in Queens. Brooklyn, exclusive of the towns annexed five months prior to the election, voted against consolidation by a majority of 1,034. The older parts of Brooklyn and Flushing were the only segments to have political unification forced upon them.³

Although the referendum was favorable to the consolidation, the terms under which political unification was to be accomplished were difficult to define. An area of 300 square miles was affected. In Brooklyn alone there were over forty tax rates, and there was a city and county debt. It would take time to unscramble the intricate financial puzzles, and all sections were clamoring for improvements. The first bill to create a commission to draft a charter failed to pass in 1895, but on January 9, 1896, a resolution was introduced by Senator Clarence Lexow authorizing the Senate and Assembly committees on Affairs of Cities jointly to inquire into the matter. This committee recommended a consolidation bill providing for the appointment by the Governor of a commission of fifteen members to draft a charter. This bill was passed in March, 1896, and

³ Not all of Queens County was included. The Towns of Oyster Bay, North Hempstead and most of Hempstead withdrew from Queens to form Nassau County on January 1, 1899. Bronx County was erected out of New York County on January 1, 1914. Long Island City approved, but Brooklyn rejected the Charter proposed in 1896 and Mayor Strong of New York refused to approve the Charter finally adopted.

Mr. Green was named president of the commission by Governor Morton. The charter drafted by this commission was presented to the Legislature on February 19, 1897, and with Governor Morton's signature became a law on May 4, 1897. The first election of officers for Greater New York was held on November 2, 1897, and the new city came into being on January 1, 1898.

The death of Andrew H. Green, at the age of eighty-four, was one of the most shocking incidents of its kind in the annals of the city. In 1903, as Mr. Green was about to enter his home on Park Avenue, he was shot and killed by Cornelius Williams, a demented Negro.⁴

As noted in the previous chapter, Richard Croker had returned to New York and secured the election of Van Wyck, who was to rule Greater New York for its first four years. Having gained control of the city, Croker entered state politics with the idea of extending his power. When Theodore Roosevelt returned from San Juan a hero, his popularity bothered Boss Platt as well as Croker. Platt finally nominated Roosevelt for Governor, and Croker, seeking to repeat his success in the city, named Judge Augustus Van Wyck, brother of the Mayor, to run against "T.R."

At first the political situation favored the Democrats, but in resentment over the treatment of Judge Joseph F. Daly, whom Croker had refused to renominate as a punishment for his independence, Bourke Cockran led a revolt against Croker which split the city Democrats and caused Roosevelt to be elected by a narrow margin of 18,000 votes. Independent voters did not want another Van Wyck in Albany, to do Croker's bidding, and the city administration was making enemies in high places.

Shortly after Van Wyck took office, the city began a fight against the Manhattan Elevated Railway. Croker is said to have called on George Gould and demanded that compressed-air pipes, in which Croker was interested, be attached to the elevated structures. Gould refused and defied Croker. Much more serious were the sensational revelations of the Mazet Committee investigation in 1899, when it was shown that Tammany not only was taking graft from the rich and from organized vice but also was robbing the poor.

Charles W. Morse, head of the American Ice Company, in order to insure a monopoly and keep up the price of ice, had secured from Mayor Van Wyck exclusive privileges to land ice on the city docks. It was shown that the ice

⁴ Williams is supposed to have mistaken Mr. Green for John R. Platt, who had made a fortune in the glass business and had lavished some \$700,000 on an attractive mulatto woman named Hannah Elias. Williams was looking for this woman when he shot Mr. Green. Williams was sent to Matteawan as an insane murderer. Hannah Elias, who never knew Mr. Green, was later arrested on complaint of Platt and charged with extortion. The Court of Appeals permitted her to retain the \$684,000 given to her by Platt, which she is supposed to have increased by shrewd investments. The woman disappeared from New York in 1917.

company had presented blocks of stock to both Croker and Van Wyck. The Mayor's stock was worth \$700,000 before the revelations caused the stock to tumble. It was a serious matter to rob the poor in tenements where ice was a necessity. Croker made the further mistake of swinging the Democratic Convention to Bryan in 1899, and this brought about the election of McKinley; but the city scandals were even more serious for Tammany. Liberal Democrats were backing Bird S. Coler, who had shown his independence of Croker, and the Greater New York Democracy had adopted "Down with Croker" as their slogan.

Croker went abroad in 1901, leaving Lewis Nixon in charge of the organization. When he returned he was confronted by a primary election fight, which he lost in Manhattan. He turned to Brooklyn, where Hugh McLaughlin had picked Edward M. Shepard for Mayor. Deciding to "pander to the better element," Croker supported Shepard. The Fusionists again named Seth Low, with William Travers Jerome for District Attorney in Manhattan. There was another dramatic campaign, with many frauds, but the Democrats were split and Seth Low and the Fusion ticket won by a plurality of 30,000. Croker left again and went to Wantage, leaving a triumvirate consisting of Charles F. Murphy, Louis Haffen, and Daniel F. McMahon to rule Tammany Hall in its hour of defeat. Greater New York was about to have its first reform administration.

Chapter Twelve



Expansion, Reform, and Confusion

NEW YORK'S local political annals, though interesting, are perhaps the least significant part of the city's history. The year 1898, when Greater New York was born, had a quiet beginning. Breathless from exertions in the cause of progress, the dying century seemed tired and ready to expire without more ado. Phrase makers have since translated *fin de siècle* into the "Gay Nineties" or the "Mauve Decade." In New York the period was comfortable and pleasant for many people, and everyone liked its ostentation.

In the world at large there was rather less turmoil than usual. The Greco-Turkish War was over, and the British had just celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign—the longest and most peaceful in English history. Great Britain had recognized French claims in Tunis in return for commercial concessions, and France and Russia were forming an entente.

Russia had signed a sealing treaty with Japan. The United States and Great Britain were working on an arbitration treaty and had set up a commission to settle the Alaskan boundary dispute. Kaiser Wilhelm was building up a new Germany, and France was still absorbed in the Dreyfus case. The notorious General Weyler had been recalled from Cuba, the Spanish Cabinet had offered the Cubans a large measure of self-government, and the United States man-of-war "Maine" had been dispatched to Havana on a friendly mission.

All was serene in the United States. President McKinley and Mark Hanna had the national situation well in hand. Bryan and his free-silver heresies had been effectively squelched, and the Dingley Tariff Law was in effect. Wall Street had ended the most prosperous year in nearly a decade. The "balance of foreign trade" was unprecedentedly favorable. All sugar records had been broken, and wheat reached \$1 a bushel. Governor Black and a Republican Legislature were firmly entrenched in Albany, and New York State was repre-

sented in the Senate by Thomas C. Platt, with Edward Murphy, Jr., as his Democratic colleague—both “practical” men.

In Manhattan the police had just adopted the Bertillon system but otherwise seemed to be making little progress in suppressing crime. Chief of Police Coulin had been accused of insubordination; forty-three policemen were up on charges; Thomas Hogan had escaped from Blackwell’s Island; Albert White, the keeper of the morgue, was on trial for illegally disposing of dead bodies; the Manhattan Association of Ministers had vigorously assailed the Reverend Dr. Lyman Abbott’s views on the Bible; the Metropolitan Traction Company was indicted for operating “dead man’s curve” at Broadway and Fourteenth Street; John D. Rockefeller had donated \$500,000 to Baptist missionary societies; the new Madison Square Garden was having financial difficulties; Theodore Roosevelt had become Assistant Secretary of War; Grant’s Tomb had been dedicated; work was progressing on the second East River bridge; Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii was in New York on a visit; plans for remodeling City Hall had been approved; and the first electric range had been installed in Andrew Carnegie’s mansion on Fifth Avenue.

The long fight over consolidation of the city was over, and the decision had been accepted with good grace except by a few die-hards, mostly in Brooklyn, where a solemn ceremony was conducted in the City Hall to mark the passing of the City of Brooklyn. The oration of the occasion, entitled “From Great to Greater,” was delivered by St. Clair McKelway, editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, which had led the fight against consolidation.¹

There was no comparable ceremony celebrating the creation of Greater New York. A group of citizens had met at the Fifth Avenue Hotel on January 31, 1898 and launched a movement for an impressive public celebration of the event. May 4, the supposed anniversary of the founding of New Amsterdam, had been fixed as the date. A feature of the program was to have been the presentation of a special medal to Andrew H. Green. Mr. Green received the medal at a special meeting in the chamber of the Board of Aldermen, but the larger celebration was never held.

On February 15 the “Maine” was destroyed by an explosion in Havana harbor, with the loss of 268 lives. A Board of Inquiry promptly reported that the cause of the explosion lay outside the ship. In quick sequence, Congress appropriated \$50,000,000 for defense, recognized Cuba’s independence, and demanded that Spain evacuate the island. Spain declared war on April 24. On May 1 Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay; on July 17 General

¹ The *Eagle*, along with several other publications, had been designated as the recipient of legal city advertising. This indefensible arrangement was embedded in the revised charter, and the pap continued to flow until the new charter, adopted in 1936, became operative. In justice to the *Eagle*, it should be recorded that its management opposed retention of these provisions in the new charter.

Shafter captured Santiago; and the peace protocol with Spain was signed on August 12, 1898. We remembered the "Maine," but the advent of Greater New York was forgotten.

It was not a mere coincidence that the expansion of New York City and the emergence of the United States as a world power occurred almost simultaneously. The same forces produced both. Those forces had been gathering and concentrating over a considerable period, with New York as the focal point and directional center. The mystery of the destruction of the "Maine" remains unsolved, but other factors in the Spanish conflict are no longer obscure. It was a period of expansion for many nations, and the United States was in keen competition with them all. The great period of internal expansion, based on railroad construction and the ruthless exploitation of our national resources, was drawing to a close. Industry was making great strides but needed new markets. Our most promising fields were in the Western Hemisphere. American capital was being poured into Cuba and other Latin-American countries. Dollar diplomacy was in the saddle. Between 1895 and 1900 more American ships entered New York from Cuba than from any other country.

As in other matters, our motives in the Spanish conflict were mixed. Our traditional role as the friend of liberty put us emotionally on the side of the Cuban rebels, but freeing Cuba would also be good business. And the moribund Spanish Empire was ripe for dissolution. The forces involved were largely concentrated in New York—not only the financial and other interests, but the *Libertads* as well. In Congress, William Sulzer was a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and an ardent supporter of *Cuba libre*. William Randolph Hearst and the yellow press were eager for war.

New York's part in the Spanish War and the national expansion that followed differed only in degree from the part the metropolis had played ever since the Federal government was founded in Wall Street. Expansion of activities in the metropolitan area was a natural result of the forces operating there, and, although the political consolidation of 1898 was logical and inevitable, it was consummated by local interests having little to do with the basic factors in the growth of the metropolis.

Seth Low, who succeeded Van Wyck and became Greater New York's first reform mayor, was the son of A. A. Low, a merchant prince who lived on Brooklyn Heights in a mansion from which he could see his famous clipper ships come into the bay and anchor beneath his windows. Born in 1850, when the clippers were in their glory, Seth Low traveled extensively and entered Columbia College after completing his secondary education in private schools. In his senior year, he took a course in law, but on graduation he entered his father's firm and specialized in the China trade. Interested in political reform, he became the Republican candidate for Mayor of Brooklyn in 1881. With the

support of Henry Ward Beecher and of independent Democrats as well as Republicans, Low won.

The Brooklyn Charter of 1880 represented an innovation in municipal government in that it centralized authority in the Mayor, giving him not only power to appoint heads of departments but also control over the spending of public funds. This system became known as the Brooklyn Plan, and under Low Brooklyn attained national prominence as a model form of municipal government.

Mayor Low was an advocate of Civil Service reform, and he put the merit system to the test in Brooklyn, where it was acclaimed as a success by everyone except the politicians of both parties. He proclaimed that the old practice of compelling city employees to contribute to party campaigns was to end. He openly expressed his contempt for the Republican boss, Thomas C. Platt, and political bossism generally. The Republican leaders reciprocated by naming their own candidate in 1897, when the Citizens' Union nominated Low to run against Van Wyck, Croker's candidate. The split resulted in the election of Van Wyck. The reform forces were more united after the orgy of corruption during the Van Wyck administration, and Low won in 1901 despite the fact that the Democrats nominated Edward L. Shepard, himself a reformer, to oppose Low.

Seth Low's special knowledge and interests had caused him to be sent to the Peace Conference at The Hague in 1899, and he worked diligently to establish a permanent tribunal for arbitrating differences between the United States and Great Britain. He believed that the United States had become a world power because it had "invited all Europe to share in its destinies," and he declared that "no nation could live to itself alone and continue to be either great or strong."

The two years of Seth Low's administration of Greater New York, 1902 and 1903, were marked by honest, efficient government. He drove crooks from office, put able men in the various departments, and avoided some of the mistakes of the reformers under Mayor Strong which had helped to bring Tammany back into power. Low's messages and reports reveal his broad conceptions of municipal government and his vision as a civic leader, as well as the scholarly qualities of the man who had become President of Columbia University in 1890.

But Seth Low was not a politician and could not dramatize his personality or his good work. Furthermore, the Fusionists lacked cohesion and continuity of policy. Having accomplished their purpose of throwing the Tammany rascals out, they tended toward factionalism or indifference. Successful politicians, however, work at their calling all the time. The members of the triumvirate Richard Croker had left in control of Tammany when he retired to Wantage to breed

a Derby winner were soon at odds and Charles F. Murphy emerged as the new leader.

Born in the Gas House District in Manhattan, Murphy had started a saloon at Avenue A and East 19th Street by the time he was twenty-one. Eleven years later he owned four saloons and had entered politics. Van Wyck made Murphy Dock Commissioner. With Alderman James E. Gaffney, his brother John J. Murphy, and Richard J. Crouch, a henchman, the new Tammany leader formed the New York Contracting and Trucking Company. It was later revealed that this company had made a profit of from \$60,000 to \$65,000 a year on two city piers they had leased for \$4,800 a year.

In many ways Charles F. Murphy was the most human and the strongest leader developed by Tammany. He had common sense, and he inspired confidence in men who did not subscribe to his political credo. During his regime Tammany learned that there was such a thing as "honest graft" and that smart politicians did not have to break the law to make profits out of politics and public office. When the Pennsylvania Railroad was seeking to enter Manhattan the Board of Aldermen withheld approval of its right to use the streets until a \$2,000,000 contract for excavation went to Murphy's company. It was later shown that Murphy's concern secured contracts amounting to \$15,000,000 for work related in one way or another to the city. Murphy did not go abroad or hide his wealth. He bought an estate at Good Ground, Long Island, and lived like the millionaire he had become but without the ostentation or foreign style displayed by Croker.

Murphy was a good judge of men, and his mastery of practical politics exceeded that of his predecessors. To regain control of City Hall he confounded the Fusionists and the Democratic organizations in the city by naming George Brinton McClellan for Mayor and by endorsing the Fusionists Edward M. Grout and Charles V. Fornes for Controller and President of the Board of Aldermen, respectively. By this coup Murphy split the opposition and elected his ticket.

George B. McClellan was the son of General "Little Mac" McClellan, the Civil War hero. He was born in Dresden while his parents were on a visit to Germany and was three years old before he came to the United States. General McClellan had been Chief Engineer of the New York Dock Department in 1868, but later the family had moved to Trenton, when General McClellan was elected Governor of New Jersey.

George prepared to enter West Point, but his father wanted him to be an engineer and sent him to Princeton, where he graduated in 1889. At Princeton the future mayor became interested in writing, and after graduation he became a reporter on New York newspapers, covering politics. Croker took a liking to

McClellan, and in 1898 the young man was made a trustee of Brooklyn Bridge (then a toll bridge) at \$4,000 a year. In 1902, at the age of twenty-seven, McClellan was admitted to the bar, and the next year he was elected President of the Board of Aldermen. He served in Congress from 1898 to 1903, when he became Mayor at the age of thirty-seven.

McClellan was an able and honest mayor, and the Fusionists who went into office with him helped make his first administration a success. Among other achievements during his first years in office was initiation of the Catskill Water Supply System and construction of the Municipal Building. Rapid transit had become a live issue by 1906, and William Randolph Hearst ran against McClellan, urging municipal ownership of rapid transit. Hearst was defeated by a narrow margin and began a violent campaign against the "fraud Mayor," demanding a recount.

Meantime McClellan had broken with Murphy in January, 1906, after having dismissed several Tammany officeholders and started a war on vice, graft, and gambling. Although he had served under Croker, McClellan utterly repudiated Murphy. "As a Democrat and as Mayor of his town, I am unalterably opposed to Charles F. Murphy and everything he stands for," he declared. Later he said: "I knew I was signing my political death warrant; but there comes a time in every man's life when he must choose one course or another. I had to keep my self-respect." McClellan also kept his sense of humor. The day before his second election, the British Consul told him that Prince Louis of Battenberg was arriving to pay him an official visit. "Do you want to ruin me?" the Mayor asked. When the situation was explained, the British warships went outside the harbor and cruised about until after the election.

While in his last term McClellan was Stafford Little lecturer on public affairs at Princeton, and later became Professor of Economic History, succeeding Grover Cleveland. Having been a first lieutenant in the Eighth New York National Guard Regiment in 1885 and 1888, McClellan was promoted from Major to Colonel in the Ordnance Department and took part in the Meuse-Argonne battle in the First World War. He retired from his post in Princeton in 1930 and went to live in Washington. A lover of Italy, McClellan was an incorporator, trustee, and vice-president of the American Academy in Rome and became an authority on Italian history. He was author of *The Oligarchy of Venice*, *The Heel of War*, and *Bonaparte and Venice*. His views on current Italian history were not well received here—especially his praise of Mussolini and his comparison of the seizure of Ethiopia with our treatment of Nicaragua.

William J. Gaynor, who followed McClellan in City Hall, according to Louis H. Pink, his biographer, "combined the gift of literary gossip and philosophy of Philip Hone, the clever wit and satire of the elegant A. Oakley Hall, and the

simple earnestness of Peter Cooper.² Certainly Gaynor was something of a mystic and an enigma to his friends and enemies, and he became anathema to the political leaders.

Gaynor was born in 1849 near Oneida, New York, the son of a farmer-mechanic. In early manhood he attended the Assumption Academy of the Christian Brothers at Utica, joined the order, and taught in St. Louis as Brother Hadrian. Not much is known of him during this period, later he abandoned the Catholic faith and studied law in the office of Horatio Seymour, who was Governor during the Civil War and ran only 300,000 behind Grant in New York as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency. Gaynor also studied law in the Utica office of Ward Hunt, who went on to the Court of Appeals and to the Supreme Court.

Young Gaynor came to Brooklyn from Boston in 1873, during the panic, and became a reporter on the Brooklyn *Argus* at \$15 a week. He first attracted notice when he brought suit against Theodore Tilton for allegedly libeling Henry Ward Beecher. The Beecher-Tilton scandal had already appeared in print, and the basis of Gaynor's charge was Tilton's side of the story as published in the Brooklyn *Eagle*, which was on Beecher's side in the sensational controversy. There was no known motive for Gaynor's action in bringing this suit, and the suit was promptly dismissed.

Shortly thereafter Gaynor changed his middle name from James to Jay, was married and divorced, and became a local Flatbush lawyer. He was a Democrat and counsel for the Law and Order Association and the Excise Commissioners. Gaynor's law business included all kinds of cases, from libel and murder to applying for a franchise for a new Coney Island Railroad. His first important client was William Ziegler, for whom Gaynor won a suit giving Ziegler control of the Royal Baking Powder Company. With Ziegler's support Gaynor became a crusader against the Long Island Water Company, in opposition to Mayor Chapin of Brooklyn. This controversy hurt Chapin, who otherwise might have become Governor and possibly President. Gaynor had become politically ambitious and was several times suggested as a candidate for Mayor of Brooklyn and for other offices. In 1903 he went to the Supreme Court, where his subsequent activities kept him before the public.

The New York *World* wanted Gaynor to run against Van Wyck in 1897, when the Fusionists picked Seth Low. Gaynor might have won, in which case Greater New York would have been spared a lot of scandals. Gaynor favored Henry George. Theoretically he was himself a Single Taxer; he was a Bryanite with reservations, and he advocated municipal ownership and operation of rapid transit. Later Gaynor attacked the "Ice Trust." Nevertheless, he united

² Louis Heaton Pink, *Gaynor, the Tammany Mayor Who Swallowed the Tiger; Lawyer, Judge, Philosopher* (New York: International Press, 1931).

with Shepard and the McLoughlin organization in support of Augustus Van Wyck against Theodore Roosevelt for Governor in 1900. Although Gaynor was suggested for Governor in 1898 and in 1901, he remained on the Supreme Court bench, keeping himself before the public by frequent hard-hitting attacks on everything that displeased him.

William Randolph Hearst urged Gaynor to run against McClellan in 1906, and offered him the support of the Municipal Ownership League. The Democrats also wanted Gaynor, but the Fusionists were opposed. The upshot was that Hearst took the nomination himself and was defeated by only a narrow margin.

At this stage the political merry-go-round began to revolve at a dizzy speed. McClellan turned on Murphy, and Hearst became Murphy's candidate for Governor. Gaynor supported Hearst against Hughes and expected the vice-presidential nomination with Bryan that went to John W. Kern in 1908. By 1909, when it came time for the mayoralty nominations, Hearst had again turned against Murphy and was ready to support Gaynor for Mayor. So was Pulitzer's *New York World*, Hearst's chief newspaper rival, as well as the Republicans and Fusionists in a mild way. At this stage Charles F. Murphy indicated that he also favored Gaynor. There had never been such a confused situation.

Gaynor added to the confusion by going abroad and putting himself in the hands of his friends. Hearst cooled toward him because he would not declare against Tammany, and Gaynor's silence smashed the Fusion movement. Later he broke with Hearst and lashed out at the Fusionists, who nominated Otto Barnard, a Republican businessman. Murphy then named Gaynor. Hearst opposed Gaynor and endorsed the Fusion candidates, mostly Democrats, including John Purroy Mitchel, George McAneny, and William A. Prendergast.

Gaynor made a dramatic campaign. When he appeared at the Wigwam to make a speech he began by exclaiming: "So this is Tammany Hall!" and served notice that instead of being swallowed by the Tiger he would devour that animal. In the midst of the campaign he brought a suit for libel against the *World*, which was supporting him, because it had printed, as an advertisement, an article by Arthur Brisbane of the Hearst papers attacking him. Gaynor won by a plurality of 73,074. Hearst ran third, but the Fusionists generally were elected and Charles S. Whitman became District Attorney. At his inauguration, Gaynor made this brief statement: "I enter upon this office with the intention of doing the best I can for the City of New York. That will have to suffice. I can do no more."

After the simple inaugural, Gaynor walked to his house on Eighth Avenue in Brooklyn by way of Brooklyn Bridge. He continued to walk to and from his home and City Hall. Gaynor cleaned house and appointed only one Tammany district leader to office—Frank J. Goodwin, as Deputy Charities Commissioner.

In Albany, Franklin D. Roosevelt in the Senate worked against some of Gaynor's policies, but the Mayor's hands were strengthened by the so-called Gaynor Charter of 1911. The Gaynor administration also derived great benefit from the able Fusionists in the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. Gaynor got along well with most of them most of the time. He built subways and with George McAneny worked out the Dual Transit System.

Mayor Gaynor was shot in 1910, six months after taking office, by James J. Gallagher, a disgruntled employee of the Dock Department. The shooting occurred as he was boarding the "Kaiser Wilhelm" for a trip abroad. As President of the Board of Aldermen, John Purroy Mitchel served as Acting Mayor until Gaynor returned to his office, still carrying in his pharynx Gallagher's bullet, which was never removed.

Gaynor's administration was punctuated by many dramatic and colorful incidents. Hearst continued his attacks, as did old and new enemies. Gaynor himself read *The Wisdom of Franklin*, quoted Epictetus and other philosophers, and was alternatively irascible and amiably stoical. And, almost inevitably, Gaynor was confronted with a police scandal. On July 18, 1912, Herman Rosenthal, a gambler, was shot. It soon became apparent that the police, including Lieutenant Becker, were involved. Gaynor made the mistake, at first, of defending the police.

The Becker case was one of the most sensational in New York's history, and it made District Attorney Whitman Governor. Whitman had entered politics as an assistant corporation counsel in the administration of Seth Low. He became a magistrate and began campaigning against the vicious police system. Elected District Attorney of New York County in 1909, he continued his crusade against crime and police corruption. On July 15, 1912, in the office of the *New York World*, Herman Rosenthal signed an affidavit charging that Police Lieutenant Charles Becker was blackmailing him for protection in connection with his gambling. The *World* informed Whitman of the matter, and the District Attorney made an appointment with Rosenthal for the next afternoon.

In the early morning hours of July 18, Whitman received a phone call from Herbert Swope of the *World*, telling him that four men in an automobile had roared down Broadway to the Metropole Hotel at West 43rd Street and riddled Rosenthal with lead from sawed-off shotguns. Whitman took over and began the most sensational fight against police corruption since the Lexow Investigation in the 1890's. "Leftie Louie" Rosenberg, "Dago" Frank Cirofici, and "Gyp the Blood" Horowitz were convicted, along with Becker. The Rosenthal case was the first in which "gangsters" using an automobile to "rub out" a "squealer" revealed new criminal techniques and introduced the public to the new nomenclature of the underworld.

In addition to cleaning up the Rosenthal case, Whitman and a corps of

young assistants pursued criminals with great vigor, breaking all records for convictions. In 1913 Whitman was the Republican candidate for Governor against Martin H. Glynn, who had succeeded William Sulzer after the latter had been impeached. Two years later Whitman was elected; his opponent was Samuel Seabury, who was to make a similar record in his crusade against corruption. Whitman was defeated in 1918, when Alfred E. Smith was elected Governor. Whitman joined Seabury and others in promoting Fusion in 1933, when LaGuardia was nominated and elected Mayor.

Gaynor had mishandled the Becker case, but he had become a national figure and William Jennings Bryan suggested him for President. To get the nomination Gaynor should have run for Governor in 1910; instead he had refused the nomination. When Colonel House, gum-shoeing for a candidate, urged Gaynor to go to Texas, he would not go. Thus rebuffed, House turned to Woodrow Wilson.

When it came time for Gaynor's renomination as Mayor, he had broken completely with Murphy, and the latter at a famous meeting of leaders at Delmonico's had refused Gaynor a renomination. Gaynor had also lost the aid of the *New York World*, which now tried to get him to support John Purroy Mitchel. Gaynor might have done so had he lived. Otherwise his own independent candidacy would have elected McCall and brought Tammany back into power in 1914.

Again leaving his political future in the hands of a citizens' group which had nominated him for a second term, Gaynor sailed for Liverpool on the "Baltic." He died at sea on September 10, 1913. From the ship he had sent a brief message to his supporters that might well serve as his epitaph. In defiance of Murphy, as well as of Hearst, Pulitzer, the Citizens' Union, the City Club, and others who had supported and opposed him at different times, he declared: "I have been Mayor!"

Chapter Thirteen



Fusion's Triumph and the Reaction

MAYOR GAYNOR'S death united the Fusionists in support of John Purroy Mitchel, an attractive, able candidate and effective campaigner. Only thirty-four, Mitchel was tall and wiry, with a long, sharply chiseled, serious face. He was a graceful dancer of the Vernon Castle type and wore clothes well, and the youthful Mayor made a pleasing impression in the almost continuous ceremonies that took place during the First World War.

Mitchel's grandfather was John Mitchel, the famous Irish revolutionist who openly urged sedition in his paper, *The United Irishman*. He escaped from prison and came to New York, where he was given a great reception at City Hall in 1853. Later he edited a newspaper in New York and championed the South. When the Civil War started he and his three sons fought for the Confederacy. One was killed in the attack on Fort Sumter and another at Gettysburg. Mayor Mitchel's father was wounded four times, but survived to return to New York and marry Mary Purroy, daughter of Henry D. Purroy, a well-known Democratic politician who was alternately in and out of Tammany. The future reform Mayor was given his grandfather's name and became his heir.

John Mitchel, the paternal grandfather, had been a Protestant, but his grandson was a Catholic. John Purroy Mitchel studied law at Fordham and Columbia and later entered the law firm of Mullan, Coff, and Mitchel. Mayor McClellan, during his second term and after he had broken with Murphy, made Mitchel an assistant corporation counsel to investigate charges instigated by Henry Bruere against John F. Ahearn, then Borough President of Manhattan. Mitchel did such a good job that Ahearn was ousted, and Mitchel became one of the two Commissioners of Accounts, authorized under the former charter to investigate departments in the municipal government. Before long he had uncovered enough evidence to cause Louis F. Haffen, President of The Bronx, and Bor-

ough President Bermel of Queens to follow Ahearn into ignominious retirement. Digging into the hidden recess of the city's governmental structure, Mitchel not only found plenty of evidence of wrongdoing but also learned as much about the city's business and how it was conducted as anyone in the city.

The publicity that followed these investigations made it inevitable that Mitchel should himself become a candidate for office, and his election as President of the Board of Aldermen followed. As the second ranking official in the city, Mitchel made excellent use of his special knowledge and capacities during Gaynor's incumbency and was the logical candidate to head the Fusion ticket in 1913. He was elected by a plurality of 125,304, along with a Fusion Board of Estimate and Apportionment. George McAneny succeeded Mitchel as President of the Board of Aldermen, and William A. Prendergast was Comptroller.

Mitchel's appointments included: Henry Bruere, prominent in the work of the Bureau of Municipal Research, as City Chamberlain; Robert Adamson, who had been a reporter on the *World* and had exposed the Ahearn and other scandals, as Fire Commissioner; John J. Murphy, of the Citizens' Union, to the Tenement House Department; Henry Moskowitz, the husband of Bella Moskowitz who later became chief adviser to Alfred E. Smith, as chief of the Civil Service Commission; John A. Kingsbury, as Commissioner of Charities; and to the Department of Corrections, Katharine B. Davis, who had been Director of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, head of the Bedford Reformatory for Girls, and a trustee of the Rockefeller Bureau of Social Hygiene. For the difficult position of Police Commissioner, Mitchel selected Arthur Woods, a young Harvard man who had studied penology. Dr. Sigismund Goldwater, head of Mt. Sinai Hospital, was induced to become Health Commissioner.

Without exception these officials added to their reputations while in office and won further distinctions afterwards. The Mitchel administration was perhaps the most efficient the city had ever had. There was no lack of teamwork such as had beset Seth Low and other reformers in City Hall. Mayor Mitchel, with his passion for figures and his intimate knowledge of the city's departments, bore down heavily on his economy policy and produced surprising results. Administrative costs were cut and services were increased due in large measure to the effective studies of Chamberlain Bruere on the reorganization of various city departments. The Mitchel administration also made considerable progress in improving relations with the state, thus gaining many concessions which were of help in financial and other matters. Some years were to elapse before the city had genuine home rule and a charter of its own making, but Mitchel worked intelligently and persistently to secure greater consideration from Albany. He was able to make more headway than some of his predecessors had, because his administration was non-partisan.

It was under Mayor Mitchel that New York took the lead among American cities in formulating and adopting comprehensive zoning regulations to control the uses, height, and bulk of buildings. George McAneny, as chairman of the Committee on the City Plan, of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, named a committee on the height of buildings, headed by Edward M. Bassett, to study this problem. That committee, later known as the Commission on Building Districts and Restrictions, drafted the Building Zone Resolution adopted in 1916.

Despite their many manifestations of honest and efficient municipal government, the Fusionists were repudiated at the next city election, but there was a special reason for the downfall of the Mitchel administration which did not exist in the case of previous reform mayors. In the middle of his administration a violent controversy arose over the management of charitable institutions. At that time the city was contributing over \$3,000,000 a year for the support of some 22,000 dependent children in private institutions—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. Foundlings were alternately sent to Catholic, Jewish and Protestant institutions, many of which maintained high standards. As a result of a special investigation, twenty-six of the city orphanages were found to be below standard. Conditions were deplorable in some of them, and Mayor Mitchel ordered that no more children should be admitted to such orphanages until the objectionable conditions had been remedied. In the report the Catholic institutions came off better than those under Protestant management. The Catholics, however, became embittered and began violent attacks upon the Mayor. The fact that Mayor Mitchel was himself a Catholic seemed only to increase the bitterness.

Mitchel did not falter under the criticism; he repeatedly answered his attackers and stood by Dr. Kingsbury. "For two years and a half," he declared, "as the representative of the people of the City, I have been endeavoring to secure humane treatment and proper care for the 22,000 homeless and dependent children committed as city wards to private charitable institutions. I have been endeavoring to secure proper administration of public funds annually disbursed to these institutions for the care of the city's wards. That is the cause I am fighting for and I shall continue to fight for it, no matter what damage it may bring to me, for it is a matter of public duty and personal conscience."

On another occasion, in answer to attacks made upon him by churchmen, he said: "If there is one thing that is fundamental in American life, it is that, just as we declare that Government shall not lay its hands upon the altar of the Church, so the Church shall not lay its hands upon the altar of Government, and let me say that, while I am mayor, it will not."¹

¹ Burton J. Hendrick in *The Mayor of New York*, *World's Work*, September, 1916.

Burton J. Hendrick, in an article on the Mayor in which the above remarks are quoted, recalled that Abram S. Hewitt ended his political career when, as Mayor, he declined to review the parade and refused to fly the Irish flag over City Hall on St. Patrick's Day. "Most people believe," Mr. Hendrick added, "that Mayor Mitchel's attitude on the charities question will make inevitable his retirement to private life." Many people still believe that this prediction came true and will agree with Mr. Hendrick that the controversy "enriched our political annals with an example of almost unprecedented courage."

John Francis Hylan, who succeeded Mitchel, came to Brooklyn at the age of nineteen from Hunter, New York, where he was born in 1868. He got a job on the elevated railroad and after a few years became a licensed engineer. He married and settled in the Bushwick section, studied law at the New York Law School in 1897, and later practiced law for ten years. "Big Jim" Sinnott, the Democratic boss of the Bushwick section, and Patrick McCarren, the Brooklyn leader, backed Hylan for City Magistrate, a position he held from 1906 to 1914. In 1915 he became a judge of the County Court and made a lot of public speeches attacking transit conditions. The Dual Transit System, inaugurated under Gaynor, was not meeting the transit needs. Construction of new lines was slowed up by the First World War, equipment on the old lines was in poor shape, and the private transit companies and the service were so bad that there was widespread indignation.

John H. McCooley, the astute political leader of Brooklyn needed a candidate to improve his own position as leader of the borough which had overtaken Manhattan in population and had the largest vote in Greater New York. McCooley went directly to William Randolph Hearst and sought his support for the Hylan candidacy for Mayor. Hearst was for municipal ownership and operation of rapid transit, and Hylan was the logical man to make a fight on this issue in 1917. Hylan was all for taking over the subways and elevated railroads, extending them, and operating them on a five cent fare at a time when the transit companies, confronted by rising costs of operation and labor troubles, were trying to break their five-cent fare contracts with the city.

Hylan defeated Mitchel and William M. Bennett by a plurality of 420,000 votes in 1917, was re-elected, and served until 1925. He received 42 per cent of the vote in the primary for nomination for a third term, but the Democratic organizations did not want him again and there was no demand from independents. Alfred E. Smith's influence was an important factor in the refusal to renominate Hylan. Hylan's health had been impaired by the strains of holding office, but he was appointed Judge of the Children's Court, where he served until his death in 1936.

Hylan at times appeared somewhat ludicrous, and during his long administration he lost favor with the public because of his tiresome demagoguery. Starting

as a crusader against the transit companies, he soon extended his attacks to include all the "interests," from reformers to international bankers and the British government. He was almost constantly feuding with members of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment—especially Comptroller Charles L. Craig—and the board meetings were rowdy. Hylan was utterly lacking in humor and at times appeared stupid and ignorant.

It was generally conceded, however, that Hylan was honest. Most of the patronage went to political leaders, and the city departments reverted to traditional methods of doing business; but the so-called Almirall Grand Jury and the Meyer and Lockwood committees, which at different times investigated his administration, failed to uncover evidence of graft and corruption of a serious nature.

It was also admitted that Hylan worked hard and endeavored to improve the city. He found a solution to the vexatious police problem by promoting a man from the ranks to head the department, thus setting a precedent that was to be followed by successors. Under Police Commissioner Richard E. Enright, prostitution and gambling were well controlled. Hylan's administration must also be credited with initiating many worth-while public improvements of lasting benefit, although some of his grandiose schemes did not work out as expected.

On Staten Island, Hylan built twelve large piers, which remained virtually unused until the Free Port was established under LaGuardia. Several terminal markets, calculated to save consumers \$150,000,000 a year, were also projected, but only one—in The Bronx—was built, and this remained a white elephant for many years. Hylan planned to create in Jamaica Bay a "great port within a port," but the scheme was never carried out. He began a Narrows Tunnel, and the Brooklyn shaft was sunk, but the work did not progress beyond that stage. Nevertheless, Hylan did accomplish a great deal in increasing rapid transit facilities. He won for the city the right to build and operate its own subways, and he started the Independent Subway System.

Hylan was fortunate in his selection of John H. Delaney to plan, build, and operate the city's subways. Mr. Delaney devised a method of financing subways on a pay-as-you-go plan, raising assessments along the rights of way and using the additional taxes to pay for construction. For a number of reasons the plan did not work out, but Mr. Delaney built and operated the Independent Subway System and established such a fine record that it paved the way for the unification of all the rapid transit facilities under public ownership and operation.

Getting rid of Hylan presented quite a problem to Tammany Hall. He had done well enough by the organization and had become a formidable figure in his own right. The fact that he retained the support of Hearst was perhaps the decisive factor in turning Governor Smith against him. Tammany, under

George Olvany, was supposed to be in process of transformation. Alfred E. Smith, Robert F. Wagner, and other able leaders were making the organization seem respectable. There was much talk of the New Tammany. The Tammany problem was to find a man who could defeat Hylan in the primary. They needed someone who was popular with the boys who had to get out the votes.

Jimmy Walker was a "natural"; he was one of the boys. And he was making a great record at Albany. Some of his more enthusiastic backers said he was another Al Smith. James J. Walker was born in 1881. His father, William H. Walker, lived in Leroy Street in Greenwich Village, the old Ninth Ward. The father had landed from Ireland as a youth, had gone into the lumber business, had later become a political leader, and once served in the Assembly. He was superintendent of public buildings when Borough President Ahearn was removed by Governor Hughes, and he did not come off any too well as a result of that scandal.

James J. Walker lived in a nice house, went to a private school, and spent vacations in the Catskills. He did not go to college. At one time he worked for the New York & Brooklyn Railroad, and he also worked for a musical publishing house and composed some sentimental songs, such as "Will You Love Me in December as You Did in May?" Among his early accomplishments were amateur acting and playing professional baseball with a Hoboken team. Walker's interest in politics probably came from his father, but his personal ambition is said to have been aroused by a New Year's Eve visit to the Walker home from Alfred E. Smith, who in 1905, as a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Jurors, had his foot on the ladder leading to political fame.

Walker was elected to the Assembly in 1910. He studied law at the New York Law School and in 1912 was admitted to the bar. A successful lawyer and legislator, he was co-author of the Walker-Donohue Boxing Law and the Sunday baseball and movie law, served as counsel for the New York Giants and several theatrical and motion picture concerns as well as Swift & Company, and was not lacking in references from Tammany judges.

By 1915 Assemblyman Walker had become Senator Walker, and in another five years he was elected leader of the Democrats, who had a majority of one in 1922-23. These were great days for the Democrats in Albany. Alfred E. Smith had been re-elected Governor. He and Walker had been roommates in earlier years in Albany, and Walker performed valuable service by keeping his slim majority in line and advancing the progressive legislation which Governor Smith was pushing through the legislature. Walker defeated Hylan in the primary after a close battle, but he won the election by a plurality of 400,000 over Frank D. Waterman, the fountain-pen manufacturer who had been nominated by the Republicans.

Jimmy Walker had a pleasing personality and was an engaging public figure.

Everyone seemed to wish him well as he took over in City Hall. He was popular with the newspaper reporters and had a good press. Even the Hearst papers, which had supported Hylan in the primary, became friendly. After the dull days of Hylan, people welcomed the witty and youthful Mayor. He made some excellent appointments, including George V. McLaughlin of Brooklyn as Police Commissioner and Dr. Louis I. Harris as head of the Department of Health. Both resigned before long; Grover A. Whalen took charge of the police, and Dr. Shirley W. Wynne became Health Commissioner. Of twenty-five department heads, Walker reappointed twenty.

Walker had dash and charm as well as wit, and he seemed to typify Broadway, the night life and the race track. He was habitually late for appointments, liked to be called the "Night Mayor," and appeared to be having a lot of fun running the city. In reality, Walker possessed a facile mind and had the rare faculty of sizing up men and arguments and of dealing effectively with the many matters that came before him. He was playboy and showman, and the Board of Estimate meetings, which had been sordid brawls or boresome affairs under Hylan, he turned into hilarious entertainment; but a large part of the public seemed to like it, and Walker's first term was a popular one. There were some minor scandals, but they left the debonair Jimmy unscathed. New York was in the midst of her greatest boom, and in retrospect the flippant, extravagant Mayor fairly represented the mood of the era just before the Wall Street crash.

It was Fiorello H. LaGuardia, as a candidate opposing Walker's re-election in 1929, who sounded the alarm and proclaimed that Tammany was up to its old rackets and that the Walker administration was full of crooks and corruptionists. LaGuardia's charges did not make much of an impression at the time, and Walker was re-elected. George W. Olvany, who had succeeded Murphy as leader of the New Tammany in 1924, was in turn succeeded by John F. Curry in 1929. The methods of these leaders were much more refined than those of their predecessors. During the big boom it was easy for politicians and office holders to get rich without attracting much attention.

During his 1929 campaign, LaGuardia charged that Magistrate Vitale, one of Walker's appointees, had borrowed \$20,000 from Arnold Rothstein, a well-known gambler who, like Herman Rosenthal in Gaynor's time, had been murdered. Shortly after Walker's re-election, the Tepecano Democratic Club, of which Magistrate Vitale was honorary president, had given a dinner, when suddenly the diners had been held up and robbed. After it developed that seven of the diners had police records, an inquiry was started into Vitale's association with these characters. The Rothstein loan was one of the main charges that caused Vitale to be removed from the Bench.

LaGuardia's campaign charges began to find vindication. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the First Judicial District ordered an investiga-

tion of the Magistrates' Courts and designated Samuel Seabury to conduct the inquiry. Mr. Seabury was a former judge of the Court of Appeals with a long record as an independent who had engaged in reform movements going back to the days of Henry George. Before Seabury concluded his investigation of the Magistrates' Courts, Governor Roosevelt appointed him a commissioner to investigate charges that had been filed against elderly Thomas C. T. Crain, District Attorney of New York County and Sachem of the Tammany Society. On April 8, 1931, Seabury became counsel of a legislative committee with broad powers to investigate the whole city government.

The Seabury investigation more than sustained the LaGuardia charges. The revelations included the buying of appointments, collusion between magistrates and political leaders to obstruct justice, the framing and illegal commitment of women victims of the Vice Squad, bribery reaching into the office of the District Attorney, and protection of gambling conducted in political clubs. It was shown that judges and political leaders were engaged in promoting all kinds of schemes. Some owned stock in bonding companies; others sold protection to bookmakers and operators of the policy racket.

William Doyle was shown to have collected some \$2,000,000 in fees for appearances before the Board of Standards and Appeals, headed by Mr. Olvany's friend, William Walsh, who received "constructive suggestions" from the Tammany leader as to the board's decisions, and zoning and condemnation proceedings had been turned into rackets. It was shown that politicians and office holders did business for cash, and some of them kept the money they collected in tin boxes. Some magistrates and other officials were removed from office, including Sheriff Thomas M. Farley of Manhattan. In a public hearing before Governor Roosevelt, Mayor Walker could not give satisfactory answers to questions put to him by Seabury, and in the end Walker resigned under fire. His political career was over, and Tammany again stood convicted of systematically looting the city.

In the interval much had happened to New York, to the nation, and to the world. Walker had taken office in the midst of the greatest boom in the city's history; when he was re-elected men were jumping from high windows in Wall Street, but there was nothing to indicate that officials in City Hall were aware of anything unusual taking place. The close connection between the economic and political developments is obvious. Because of the time lag, however, the political overturn in 1933 is not commonly associated with the Wall Street crash of 1929.

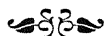
The scandals of the Walker administration would have brought a change in City Hall regardless of other developments, but the general political and economical upheaval made fundamental reforms inevitable. That the city government did not sooner feel the effects of the financial collapse was in large meas-

ure due to the extraordinary real estate situation. City revenues, largely collected from real estate, and its borrowings, based on total assessed valuations, remained high. The unprecedented speculative building orgy was made possible by new capital provided by so-called "guaranteed" mortgage companies, which continued to sell their bonds long after the stock-market crash. Assessed values actually reached an all-time high of over \$19,000,000,000 in 1931.

Although the city was well within its legal debt and tax limits, the Walker scandals caused a loss of confidence. Its bonds dropped to a point where the city could not borrow to meet pay rolls. Walker's resignation left the city in a state of chaos. In desperation, Tammany's Board of Aldermen elected Judge John P. O'Brien to fill out Walker's unexpired term as Mayor. O'Brien was an earnest, well-meaning man, and he induced George McAneny, former President of the Board of Aldermen and an independent Democrat, to take the post of Comptroller. During this interlude it was necessary for the city to get the approval of the Legislature to enter into an agreement with a group of bankers to lend the city enough money to meet its pay rolls. Under this agreement, which virtually turned the vital affairs of the city over to a bankers' committee headed by Charles E. Mitchell of the National City Bank, the city stopped all but absolutely necessary spending.

New York City was passing through her gravest peace-time crisis in three hundred years. Her waterfront and the magnificent harbor were practically deserted; all over town were gaping holes where work on new subways had been stopped. Anchorages for the great Triborough Bridge stood like accusing monuments to the city's failure. Wall Street, which had been the center of the country's financial and economic system, was inert and leaderless. From City Hall and other public offices men were leaving in disgrace; some were going to jail. Mayor O'Brien was trying to re-establish the municipal government by making futile gestures at belated reform. In Washington, President Hoover was making similar futile efforts to get the national machine going. In Albany, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had forced James J. Walker out of City Hall, was preparing to run for President.

Chapter Fourteen



LaGuardia and a New Deal for the City

WHEN Fiorello H. LaGuardia took office on January 1, 1934, city securities were selling at 76, the budget was \$30,000,000 out of balance, and the city had mortgaged its resources under the Bankers' Agreement. LaGuardia promptly balanced the budget and re-established the city's credit; the Bankers' Agreement was modified to reduce the reserve-fund requirements, and interest on city borrowings decreased. Even Wall Street's confidence in the city government was restored.

It is customary to appraise the twelve years of LaGuardia's administration in terms of his vivid personality. Under him the municipal government was personalized as never before. Since LaGuardia himself had fought clear of ordinary partisan considerations while practicing his own kind of politics, his administration was personal government at its best; but he used all the tools of politics to raise New York to a new civic plateau. Parties and individuals were victims of his minor temperamental tyrannies, but the community was the gainer. For this reason it is futile to dissociate his extraordinary personality from the unique record he achieved.

Yet Fiorello H. LaGuardia in office was the sum of complex factors, many of which were the products of his time. To a remarkable degree he personified trends and issues that were national and universal in their nature, and his opportunism made him one with them. It was not a coincidence that Franklin D. Roosevelt and F. H. LaGuardia emerged on the national and city stages at about the same time. Both were pushed to the front by forces they had accelerated but had not initiated or controlled, and LaGuardia probably did as much as Roosevelt to make it possible to inaugurate a New Deal in the nation and in New York City.

LaGuardia had more experience and better training of a practical political kind than any of Greater New York's mayors. Van Wyck, Gaynor, and Hyland

had been judges; Low was a college president and a former mayor of Brooklyn; McClellan and Walker had been legislators for short periods; and Mitchel's experience had been limited to city government. LaGuardia had served a long apprenticeship in various positions, and he could more than match the records of any of his predecessors and draw upon a formidable array of valuable experiences and attributes which they lacked.

His father, Achille, was a native of Foggia, on the Adriatic coast of the Italian boot. His mother, Irene Coen Fuzzath, descended from a family of Portuguese Jews who had been driven out of Lisbon after the Inquisition and settled in Venice. Achille LaGuardia, an expert cornetist, brought his wife to New York, where Fiorello was born in a tenement house on Varick Street on December 11, 1882.¹ Shortly thereafter, Achille LaGuardia took his wife and son west, where he served with United States Army bands in South Dakota and later at forts Huasteca and Whipple, in Arizona. At the latter, outside of Prescott, Arizona, Fiorello spent his boyhood and early school days at the army post.

When he was fifteen the Spanish-American War brought orders for his father's regiment to go to Tampa, Florida, on its way to Cuba. Despite his youth, Fiorello showed his imagination and initiative by becoming the Tampa correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. His career as a reporter was cut short by the illness of his father, who became a victim of the dysentery which ravaged the army camps during the Spanish War. Achille LaGuardia, in an attempt to regain his health, left the Army and took his family to Budapest. Fiorello was eighteen when his father died, leaving him as the chief support of his mother. Late in 1900 he got a temporary clerkship at the American Consulate General's office in Budapest and in a few months became Acting Consular Agent at Fiume, at \$300 a year.

In those days rival steamship companies were scouring Europe for emigrants to bring to the United States. Young LaGuardia made a name for himself by insisting on strict medical inspection of emigrants before they sailed, and his pay was raised to \$1,000 a year. His most dramatic performance came near the end of his service, when he refused to permit emigrants to be put on a ship and kept there several days before the ship sailed in order to permit the Archduchess Maria Josefa to see an embarkation. Although he had had an interesting time there and had learned Italian, German, Croatian, Magyar, and some French, LaGuardia resigned his post in 1906 and came back to New York.

He had little money, held several jobs, and learned stenography before taking an examination and securing an appointment as interpreter at Ellis Island on November 12, 1907, at a salary of \$1,320 a year. After studying law at the New York University night school, he received his degree and was admitted to

¹ Jay Franklin, *LaGuardia, a Biography*, with research by Joseph C. Bailey (New York: Modern Age Books, 1937).

the bar in 1910. He began practice on the lower West Side and went to live in Greenwich Village. His practice was a varied and interesting one, but he made little money. The largest fee he earned was the \$27,000 paid him by the Hylan administration for his services as special assistant corporation counsel in a condemnation suit against the Citizens' Water Supply Company to force it to reduce its claims against the city.

LaGuardia's first political activity was as a Republican election captain in the 14th Congressional District in 1912. Two years later he induced the Republicans to nominate him for Congress against the veteran Tammany incumbent, Michael Farley. LaGuardia lost, but he cut down Farley's usual majority to a bare 2,000 votes. At the next Congressional campaign LaGuardia again sought the nomination against Michael Farley. The leaders had decided to nominate Hamilton Fish, who had already served in the Assembly and was seeking promotion. With a well-calculated show of indignation, LaGuardia refused to be placated and threatened a primary fight. In the face of this threat the leaders capitulated. Fish shifted his domicile upstate and later got to Congress. Meantime LaGuardia performed the political miracle of carrying the 14th District against Farley by a vote of 7,200 to Farley's 6,800.

LaGuardia had promised his constituents that he would not vote for war unless he himself enlisted. After voting for the Joint Resolution that took us into the war and for the Selective Service Act, LaGuardia took flying lessons from Larry Bellanca at Mineola, Long Island, and joined a squadron of cadets for the Italian front with the rank of captain. His outfit first landed in England. After the Italian defeat at Caporetto, LaGuardia and a new aviation unit was sent to Foggia, his father's birthplace. Italian morale was low, and Captain LaGuardia was used as a speechmaker to arouse public opinion in favor of the Allies.

He was most successful as a propagandist, and later he and Albert Spalding, the violinist, got into Spain on forged passports and succeeded, despite the Spanish embargo, in procuring \$1,500,000 worth of badly needed raw materials for military aviation aircraft. He was also involved in a plot to start a revolution in Hungary, flew big Caproni bombers over the Dolomites, and dumped tons of propaganda pamphlets behind the enemy front, in spite of threats that aviators caught in this business would be executed as spies.

As Armistice Day and the next election drew near, LaGuardia returned to New York. He had been renominated by both Democrats and Republicans to oppose Scott Nearing, the Socialist and conscientious objector, who had been named to take advantage of the reaction against the war. The vote was: LaGuardia, 14,500; Nearing, 6,200. LaGuardia resigned his Army commission, retaining his title of major, and went to Congress, where his old seat had been kept for him.

When Alfred E. Smith was elected Governor, the Republicans persuaded LaGuardia to run for Smith's unexpired term as President of the Board of Aldermen. He was assured that if he won he could have the Republican nomination for Mayor in 1921. LaGuardia won by 1,530 votes—and Henry Curran, running for Borough President of Manhattan, won by 6,000 votes—in the first Republican victory since 1913. In Congress, LaGuardia had already shown his independent thinking and his abhorrence of party regularity. As President of the Board of Aldermen he further alienated his Republican supporters. With the aid of Hearst, Hylan had been elected Mayor on the transit issue, and now LaGuardia in effect became the ally of Hylan and Hearst.

Although LaGuardia expected the Republican nomination for Mayor in 1921 it went to Henry Curran, who defeated LaGuardia in the primary. LaGuardia supported Curran, but Hylan won easily, although even Hearst had turned on him by that time. With Tammany back in full control in City Hall, LaGuardia again sought to return to Congress, this time from the 20th District on the upper East Side, Manhattan, which included, besides Fifth Avenue, a large area where Italians, Negroes, and Puerto Ricans lived.

With the support of the Hearst papers LaGuardia won his election in the 20th District by a close vote—so close that his Tammany opponent, Frank, demanded a recount and an investigation, charging intimidation. Back in Congress, LaGuardia quickly emerged as the most sensational of Progressives since Theodore Roosevelt. In the game of getting publicity he had learned all the finer points, the most important of which are to make news and to attack something or someone as often as possible. The Republicans received rather more jibes from LaGuardia than the Democrats, and he bolted the Republican Party in 1924 when Coolidge overwhelmed John W. Davis, after the sensational McAdoo-Smith contest in the Madison Square Garden Convention.

LaGuardia had been endorsed by the American National Labor Party and the Socialists, but he insisted on being listed as a Progressive. And he continued to make news. By defying the police to arrest him for making legally intoxicating beer at 115th Street and Lenox Avenue he became the hero of the local anti-prohibition forces. Although he predicted the rise of a new party in American politics, he received the Republican nomination without opposition after he had begged the police to arrest him for being in the picket line in a garment strike.

The Republicans were glad to nominate LaGuardia to make the hopeless race against Walker in 1929. LaGuardia's campaign showed no lack of confidence on his part and he threw himself into it with all his vigor and talent for invective. He made so many charges against the Walker administration that his speeches seemed to indifferent voters like an endless tirade of senseless accusations issued merely to catch votes. The Seabury investigation was later to substantiate most of these charges, but New York was still riding the crest of

the boom and few took the local campaign seriously. Walker himself wise-cracked and ridiculed his violent opponent, declining to "go down in a sewer" to meet his opponent. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler endorsed LaGuardia but the Citizens Union characterized the candidate's speeches as "cheap claptrap" and "blatant demagoguery." Even Norman Thomas denounced him. Walker won by a vote of 865,000—a plurality of 497,000 over LaGuardia's 368,000 and Thomas's 175,000. But the big news of the day was the crash in Wall Street, when steel reached a new low and other stocks fell off from 4 to 66 points.

LaGuardia took his defeat philosophically and returned to Washington. Despite his record as a New Dealer, the landslide that elected Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated LaGuardia for Congress. But he was still a member of the "lame duck" Congress which struggled through the winter to save something from the wreck. Before leaving Congress on Inauguration Day, LaGuardia had begun to co-operate with Adolph A. Berle, Jr., of the Roosevelt "Brain Trust," and was in effect a member of the New Deal contingent. He was out of a job, but Roosevelt was to pave the way for him to become Mayor of New York by forcing Walker's resignation.

In 1933 LaGuardia had no trouble in securing the Republican nomination for Mayor, since Sam Koenig had been replaced by Chase Mellen as chairman of the New York County Republican Committee. But the Democrats had made a sweep in 1932, when Judge O'Brien was elected to fill out Walker's unexpired term and the Republicans, as a party, had been discredited and routed by the Roosevelt upheaval.

This was the situation when James A. Farley and the anti-Tammany leader of The Bronx, Edward J. Flynn, named Joseph V. McKee to head an anti-Tammany, pro-Roosevelt Recovery Party ticket. The effect of this move was to split the Democratic majority and to elect LaGuardia. The vote was: LaGuardia, 868,522; McKee, 609,053; and O'Brien, 586,672. The Socialist vote was 59,846, and LaGuardia's plurality was 262,431 out of 2,112,146 votes. These figures provided the practical political basis for LaGuardia's experiment in non-political municipal government. The Republicans had given him only slightly more than half of his votes; McKee's supporters outnumbered those of the Tammany candidates and were pro-New Deal.

Comptroller W. Arthur Cunningham, who had been elected with LaGuardia, died suddenly on May 5, 1934, and was succeeded by Joseph D. McGoldrick, of Columbia University. In January, 1935, Frank J. Taylor became Comptroller, but in 1938 he was succeeded by Mr. McGoldrick. Bernard S. Deutsch, elected President of the Board of Aldermen in 1933, died on November 21, 1935, and was succeeded by Timothy J. Sullivan, who served until the new City Council was elected in November, 1937, and Newbold Morris became President in January, 1938. These and other factors caused the voting power in the Board

of Estimate to vary from time to time. LaGuardia generally, however, managed to control the Board throughout his three terms as Mayor.

True to his promises, LaGuardia replaced the district leaders as heads of the various city departments, and filled other appointive positions as well, with non-political personnel. He promoted Lewis P. Valentine to head the Police Department, a choice that was vindicated by the absence of police scandals throughout the administration. Career men were also named to head the Fire and Correction departments, and outstanding experts were named to direct other city services.

A. A. Berle, Jr., became City Chamberlain and a close adviser to the Mayor. He promptly recommended that the office of Chamberlain be abolished. When this was later done, under the new Charter, Mr. Berle, before going to the State Department, organized the new City Planning Commission and conducted negotiations leading to the unification of rapid transit. He was succeeded as head of the Planning Commission by Rexford Guy Tugwell, another member of the Roosevelt "Brain Trust." Langdon W. Post was made head of the Tenement House Department and began the vast slum-clearance and public-housing program that was to become one of the outstanding achievements of the administration. Mr. Post became a member of the New York City Housing Authority, created early in 1934.

When LaGuardia assumed office, 413,967 individuals were receiving relief. The total cost of relief and work programs during 1934 and until early in 1936 was \$563,357,000, of which the city's share was \$118,024,000. In the fall of 1934 the city stopped borrowing and imposed a sales tax, yielding approximately \$66,000,000, to pay its share of relief costs.

John H. Delaney, head of the Board of Transportation, was retained by Mayor LaGuardia and served until he retired, in 1946, to be succeeded by General Charles P. Gross, who resigned in October, 1947. With funds from the Federal government, important sections of the Independent Subway System were completed, equipped, and put into operation. With the completion of negotiations in 1940-41 the city took over and unified its entire transit system, except certain trolley lines that have since been converted into bus routes.

With transit unification it was possible to tear down many of the obsolete elevated structures which had darkened streets in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Removal of the elevated structures at the ends of Brooklyn Bridge and over its approaches facilitated the planning of a great Civic Center for Brooklyn and the rehabilitation of a large part of the downtown area. Similar improvements are planned around the Manhattan end of the Brooklyn Bridge.

At the beginning of his administration Mayor LaGuardia enlisted the services of Robert Moses as Park Commissioner. The five city park departments were consolidated under Commissioner Moses, who continued to serve as head of the State Council of Parks, the Long Island State Park Commission, and head of the

Triborough Bridge Authority. In the last capacity, he completed the Triborough Bridge and its approaches. Later the New York City Tunnel Authority was merged with the Triborough Bridge Authority under Commissioner Moses, who became second only to the Mayor in the work of rehabilitating and reconstructing the city.

Mayor LaGuardia inherited an obsolete municipal machine, and immediately he undertook to do something about it. For nearly half a century Greater New York had been governed by an amazing hodgepodge of thousands of laws, state and local, many of them going back to the earliest days of the numerous communities that were merged to form the present city. The Charter of 1897 merely provided the framework for governing the enlarged city and continued all the old laws not inconsistent with it. The first charter of Greater New York was revised in 1901, and numerous amendments were made subsequently. In addition, a mass of general and special acts of the legislature and the ordinances passed by the Board of Aldermen after the consolidation remained on the books.

Following the election of LaGuardia in 1933, a movement was started to give the city a modern charter. A commission to draft a proposed charter was authorized on August 18, 1934, with Alfred E. Smith as chairman and Samuel Seabury as vice-chairman. The commission promptly began work, but differences developed which resulted in the resignation of Mr. Smith and other members.

The first commission was abolished and on January, 1935, Mayor LaGuardia named a new commission with Thomas D. Thatcher as chairman.² The commission began holding hearings in February, 1935, and published its proposed charter on August 14, 1936. Two questions were submitted to the voters at the subsequent election on November 3, 1936. One concerned the charter itself, and the other was whether members of the proposed new Council should be elected under the Proportional Representation system. The charter was adopted by a vote of 952,519 to 603,079; Proportional Representation by a vote of 923,186 to 555,217. Proportional Representation was repealed in 1947 by an equally emphatic vote.

Voters in 1936 were not called upon to pass on a long document which incorporated the various laws under which the city is governed. Instead, the new charter merely set forth the structure of the government. At the same time the Charter Commission created a Codification Division (later the Board of Statutory Consolidation), which began drawing up an Administrative Code in harmony with the short charter.

In general the new charter unified and simplified the city's governmental structure, clarified the division of duties as between the Board of Estimate and

² Other members of the new commission were: S. John Block, Frederick L. Hackenburgh, Mrs. William P. Earle, Jr., Charles E. Hughes, Jr., Joseph D. McGoldrick, Charles G. Meyer, Thomas I. Parkinson, and Joseph M. Proskauer. Joseph F. Chamberlain was counsel and secretary, and Laurence Arnold Tanzer was associate counsel.

the City Council, which replaced the old Board of Aldermen. The Council became a more compact legislative body, broadly representative of the several boroughs. Elected under Proportional Representation, without primary designations, minority groups secured representation. One Councilman was elected for every 75,000 votes cast in a borough. Under the revised system voted in 1947, members of the Council are elected from the Senate Districts.

The Board of Estimate—formerly the Board of Estimate and Apportionment—is unique in municipal government. It shares with the Mayor the duties and responsibilities of administering the city's business. The five boroughs are represented by their presidents, but the votes are weighted—the Mayor, Comptroller, and President of the Council having three votes each, which combined give them a majority. The other seven votes are distributed as follows: Manhattan and Brooklyn, two votes each; Queens, The Bronx, and Richmond, one vote each.

The functions of the Mayor were not materially changed, but the office of Deputy Mayor was created to relieve the Mayor of routine duties. The Deputy Mayor may cast the votes of the Mayor, but in the absence of the Chief Executive the President of the Council presides over the Board of Estimate. The Council President also becomes Acting Mayor when the Mayor is absent from the City or is incapacitated or suspended, or in case the mayoralty is vacated.

A notable feature of the new charter was the creation of a City Planning Commission and a Department of City Planning. The commission consists of the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate and six members appointed for staggered terms of eight years. The chairman, whose salary is fixed at \$15,000 a year and who must give full time to the job, is designated by the Mayor. He also serves as head of the Department of City Planning, the technical staff of the commission. In each borough there is an unpaid Advisory Planning Board of three members each appointed by the Borough Presidents for six-year terms.

The evolution of city planning in New York is a long story interwoven with the development of the city and its political and economic history. The City Planning Commission which took office on January 1, 1938, was an innovation, and it was regarded as a forward step. The primary function of the commission, as set forth in the charter, is to prepare a Master Plan of the city to provide for its more orderly development. The Master Plan, as conceived by the Charter Commission, is to show all such desirable features as would "afford adequate facilities for the housing, transportation, distribution, comfort, health, and welfare" of the city's population. The Master Plan is to serve as a guide to the commission in carrying out its other duties. These include mapping, zoning, the platting of land, and the preparation of annual capital budgets and five-year capital programs. With the passing of Federal and state laws relating to housing,

the duties of the City Planning Commission were extended to cover that field also. In addition to the above, the commission, on reference from the Board of Estimate or otherwise, is called upon to deal with many matters relating to the city's development.

Under the old charter, capital budgets were prepared by the Director of the Budget and submitted to the Board of Estimate by the Mayor. Proposed annual capital budgets are now prepared by the City Planning Commission and submitted by it to the Board of Estimate and the Council. The budgets may not exceed totals certified by the Mayor, and the Board of Estimate may change the budgets; but new projects not recommended by the commission may not be added, and the totals certified by the Mayor may not be exceeded, except by a three-fourths vote of the Board of Estimate.

Both the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate hold public hearings on capital budgets, as does the Council, but the powers of the latter are limited to eliminating items or reducing the amounts proposed. After the annual budgets are adopted, specific projects must be authorized and appropriations made. Every step in this procedure is outlined in the charter, and the duties of the various agencies are specified.

As Mayor, LaGuardia did not have to resort to extraordinary stunts to get publicity. Everything he did made news. But he did not rely entirely on the newspapers. He made weekly reports over the city's radio station, WNYC, and became a radio attraction of high rank. After two years in office he published the first edition of *New York Advancing; a Scientific Approach to Municipal Government*, in which he recorded the city's progress since his inauguration. A second volume called the *New York World's Fair Edition*, emphasizing the city's future plans, followed in 1939. In the *Victory Edition* of *New York Advancing*, 1945, he made what he called his Final Report on his twelve years in City Hall. In this report, which is remarkably restrained in tone, LaGuardia summarized the changes made in the city under his administration, contrasted them with conditions as he had found them, and outlined the improvements made in twelve years.

After leaving the office of Mayor on January 1, 1946, LaGuardia constituted himself a "watchdog" on municipal affairs and in weekly broadcasts over WJZ tried to keep citizens informed of city developments. Despite his service in national and international affairs, including service as director of UNRRA in 1946, where he did so much in helping to feed a starving world, he continued his keen interest in all city activities; only his untimely death on September 20, 1947, quieted his voice, always raised in behalf of honest and efficient government.

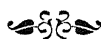
LaGuardia's record fully justified the claim that he had given New York the best administration the city had ever had. Honest and capable, he demonstrated

that municipal government could be genuinely non-partisan. Much that he did was purely experimental, and he fully appreciated that governing New York City presented special problems. Many outstanding achievements of his administration were made possible by the close co-operation of the Federal administration under Roosevelt.

The twelve years of LaGuardia's administration revealed certain facts about the government of New York City which are of the utmost importance in relation to the future. It demonstrated, in ways that before had not been possible, that it is not enough merely to put honest and capable men in office. The basic problems of the city cannot be solved by mere zeal and devotion to duty. Nor can they be solved by personalized government, even at its best. New York City's administration demands statesmanship of the highest order, coupled with scientific methods in dealing with technical matters and a degree of co-ordination never yet achieved. It calls for further centralization of powers and functions and a delegation of discretionary authority.

New York made advances along this line under LaGuardia, whose stature was increased thereby. In many fields he pointed the way toward more effective local government. Under LaGuardia New York also learned that what happens in Washington, London, Paris, Moscow, Berlin, and Tokio—and especially in Albany—may have more to do with New York's well-being than anything that takes place in City Hall. It was under LaGuardia that the city felt the full impact of the greatest depression and the greatest of wars. Out of this experience New York emerged with a new status and a new role in world affairs, both of which demand steadily evolving procedures that promote greater unity in the midst of increasing diversity and more effective integration of the complex mechanisms essential to urban existence.

Chapter Fifteen



New Yorkers and Their Government

WILLIAM O'DWYER'S career, before he became Mayor in 1945, followed the best New York tradition. The poor boy from Ireland first worked as coal passer, stoker, and fireman on ships. Later he was a hod carrier and plasterer's apprentice, helping to erect such structures as the Woolworth Building and the McAlpin Hotel. He probably did not know that another immigrant boy, Louis Horowitz, headed the company that constructed these buildings. And the future Mayor, who loved poetry and studied for the priesthood in Salamanca, Spain, while dreaming of coming to America, was not consciously following John Masefield when he became a bartender in the Vanderbilt Hotel.

From this vantage point he learned how some New Yorkers lived and behaved. Both his parents had been school teachers in Ireland, and learning was easy for him. After marrying Catherine Lenihan, who had been a telephone operator at the Vanderbilt, he settled in Bay Ridge, took a Civil Service examination, and became a policeman. His beat was the Brooklyn waterfront, where he learned more about the town and its people.

While still a policeman O'Dwyer studied law and was admitted to the bar. With a genius for making friends and the political instincts of the Irish, he organized a political club. He also became a sports promoter in his spare time, and this broadened his acquaintance, especially among newspaper men. He was a Democrat, but he was not, like Hylan, favored by John McCooey, the Brooklyn boss, and it was McKee, Acting Mayor after Walker's resignation, who appointed O'Dwyer a magistrate in 1932. LaGuardia later made him presiding judge of the Adolescent Court in recognition of his understanding treatment of the juveniles brought before him.

Governor Lehman appointed O'Dwyer to fill a vacancy in the County Court, to which office he was elected in 1938. This judgeship, with a salary of \$25,000

a year and a fourteen-year term, might have satisfied a man of different mold. Instead, when Frank V. Kelly, who succeeded McCooley as Brooklyn leader, was looking for a man to clean up the District Attorney's office, O'Dwyer accepted the nomination and was elected.

Not only did he end the scandals in the District Attorney's office; he also began a dramatic crusade against the organized gangs in Brooklyn known as Murder, Inc. O'Dwyer's intense hatred of gangsters is said to have sprung from the killing of his brother in a holdup. O'Dwyer's success in prosecuting the Brooklyn gangsters equaled that of Thomas E. Dewey in Manhattan, and O'Dwyer became the logical Democratic candidate to run against LaGuardia in 1941.

LaGuardia won, and some months later O'Dwyer joined the Army with the rank of Major. He was assigned to the office of Matériel Command in the Air Forces, where his job was to detect fraud, waste, and abuse in the production of airplanes. O'Dwyer was re-elected District Attorney in 1943, but his military leave was extended. In 1944 President Roosevelt sent him to Italy as head of the Economic Section of the Allied Control Commission. Later he became director of the War Refugee Board, a position he held until the end of the war. Although O'Dwyer had become a Brigadier General and might have accepted a \$50,000 a year job as counsel to the Independent Motion Picture Producers, when the mayoralty contest drew near in 1945 he returned to New York from his brother's ranch in California and got into the fight for the nomination. The contest was between old and new elements in Tammany. LaGuardia's announcement that he was not to be a candidate gave the Democratic organization the first chance it had had in years to recapture the city government, but victory was not a foregone conclusion.

LaGuardia's retirement was not altogether voluntary. Dewey had vetoed his nomination by the Republicans, and the Fusion ticket was in effect the Republican ticket. In this situation LaGuardia induced Newbold Morris to enter the contest. This split insured O'Dwyer election, but he would have won anyway, since he had a lead of 694,000 over Goldstein, the Republican candidate. Morris received 408,408 votes.

O'Dwyer was a new kind of Democratic candidate, and he became a new kind of organization Mayor. Despite the demand of district leaders for patronage, there was no immediate clearing out of the LaGuardia appointees. A. W. Wallander, who had been appointed to succeed Lewis P. Valentine as Police Commissioner, was an old friend, and he remained. So did many other commissioners, including Robert Moses, who was asked to stay even though he had announced his intention of supporting Newbold Morris. Mr. Moses became City Construction Co-ordinator and a close adviser to the new Mayor, although O'Dwyer did not always follow Moses's advice.

Mayor O'Dwyer moved cautiously in making appointments. He accepted recommendations from district leaders but warned them that if their candidates proved incompetent or otherwise undesirable they would be ousted. Several suffered this fate in the first few months of the new regime. Personally likable and with a degree of humility that LaGuardia lacked, O'Dwyer makes friends easily. He is popular with newspaper men, and, despite some serious mistakes which he made at the beginning of his administration, most of the city's newspapers have treated him with every consideration.

Although LaGuardia had given the city an honest and efficient administration, he left many unsolved problems to his successor, and new ones soon arose. One of the anomalies in our system of government is that municipalities feel the full impact of all social and economic ills but lack the power and resources to deal with them. This is especially true of New York, where all such troubles are aggravated by special conditions.

Mayor O'Dwyer had hardly settled in City Hall before New York was confronted by a tugboat strike. Regardless of the issues involved, the effects of a prolonged tie-up of tugboats could be as serious for New York as an enemy bombardment from the air. The Mayor of New York is not supposed to protect the community from attacks by a foreign foe, but he is held responsible for almost everything else that happens. In the case of the tugboat strike, the new Mayor acted on bad advice and declared an emergency that brought the town to a standstill and created a near panic.

Since then practically every serious labor dispute to arise in the city has been taken to City Hall. Strikes by international unions and by telephone employees, as well as other labor troubles affecting the entire nation, have become the concern of the Mayor of New York because the welfare of the community is jeopardized. In order to leave some time for other matters, Mayor O'Dwyer has created a Division of Labor Relations to help prevent strikes and to settle those that occur, but he must still make vital decisions in critical disputes between employees and employers. This is a comparatively new function to be added to that of the chief executive of the municipality, who has no powers commensurate with such responsibilities.

One of the paradoxes of democracy is that the public has little to do with the business of government. The city's voters have their say at election time, but in the intervals between elections the vastly important and complex business of administering the City of New York is left in the hands of men who get little or no guidance from the electorate. When serious problems arise they are taken directly to the Mayor.

New York's unique Board of Estimate shares with the Mayor the routine administrative duties other than those delegated by him to the various departments, but this does not relieve the Mayor. The City Council shares legislative

responsibility with the Board of Estimate and the Mayor. The system works smoothly when the Mayor controls a majority in both bodies, but he may find himself in a minority at any time. The sixteen votes in the Board of Estimate, as pointed out earlier, are so divided that the Mayor, the Comptroller, and the President of the City Council, with three votes each, have a majority over the votes of the five borough presidents. Nevertheless, one official elected on a city-wide basis may give a majority to the borough presidents, whose primary interests are in their own boroughs.

Politicians generally, even those of the same party, seldom trust each other, and they seldom if ever have the full confidence of the public. Most of the decisions they are forced to make are controversial. They are always on trial, and they know it. Most of them doubtless would rather do the right thing if they knew what it was, but most of the conflicts are not between right and wrong—more often they are between two rights. In such cases the average politician usually chooses the right that seems to be the more popular. He cannot afford to take chances, to take the long view, or to take the time to search out the finer points at issue in a given controversy.

Many vital matters affecting the welfare of the city are not openly discussed, and the general public is not aware of them. Political power is vested in officials, most of whom are elected every four years. Nominations are made by the party machines, which are usually dominated by leaders primarily interested in jobs and other rewards that go with the exercise of political power. Independent candidates and groups occasionally attain office, but the dominant characteristic of New York City's body politic is ambivalence, defined by psychologists as the "sway of co-existent contrary tendencies."

The pendulum swings constantly, but it seldom swings far. It never has the momentum to make a complete revolution, which would wreck the entire political mechanism. The pendulum is regulated by hidden springs that are subject to tensions produced by pressures of various kinds. The sources of group pressures are well known. What is not known are the processes by which these pressures balance each other and the precise factors that start the pendulum moving in one direction or the other.

The system, in the main, works surprisingly well. Routine matters are taken care of by competent civil servants, who are independent of political machines. Policy making and planning, other than the technical work on specific projects, are not so simple. That is why leadership in so many matters comes from men and women outside of politics. This results in a further concentration and pyramiding of power, since vital decisions affecting the city are often made by a few persons both in and out of office.

Out of a population of nearly 8,000,000, only a few hundred exercise a continuing influence on public policy in New York. Of these a mere handful are

politicians in office. Others are public servants with a special status, among whom Robert Moses is outstanding. He works with and through politicians but enjoys greater prestige and public confidence than most periodic office holders.

Public policy is otherwise influenced by the top men in important institutions and businesses, such as banks and insurance companies, newspaper publishers, utilities, retail stores, manufacturers, shipping, real estate, railroads, labor leaders, and other interests. In addition, a few individuals whose long service in the public interest commands respect make highly valuable contributions.

Many of these top men in New York have varied interests and provide leadership in many fields. That is their main job. Their value to their institutions and businesses is enhanced by their public activities. They function as elder statesmen or as figureheads for civic, patriotic, and cultural movements. They are philanthropic and make their organizing and managerial talents count in advancing good causes. They work hard, more than earn their big salaries, and make real contributions to the general welfare.

These are the men who make things happen in New York. Regardless of politics, they co-operate with public officials, originate or support worth-while projects in the general interest, and only occasionally seem to put their private interests first. When decisions affecting the basic activities of the city are made, these men use their power directly; but more often their power is used indirectly, through subordinates.

One of the penalties New York pays for its bigness is the nullification of the civic power of a great body of citizens which might otherwise exert a tremendous and constructive influence on public affairs. These are the men of special abilities who make the intricate organizations of the city work. They are the vice-presidents of banks, insurance companies, and other great and powerful institutions and the managers, lawyers, engineers, architects, secondary public officials, and other able people who have the special knowledge that keeps New York's closely meshed activities functioning.

These people are important in every respect except one: they do not function as normal citizens, bringing their superior knowledge and abilities to bear on civic problems and speaking out on matters affecting the general welfare. A large percentage of these highly respectable members of the community take no part in community affairs. Others represent corporations in chambers of commerce and on various committees of other organizations but have little to say about matters of common interest, especially if these are controversial.

Only the top men speak, and they speak only to each other. Subordinates are supposed to remain silent. They cannot speak for their companies or for themselves. They are kept in line by an unwritten law that forbids them to say or do anything that might embarrass the top men. There are tens of thousands of such men in New York, drawing large salaries from corporations and insti-

tutions—men who collectively wield tremendous influence in their special fields—who are as silent on civic matters as pandas in the Bronx zoo.

The mass of citizens in New York are too absorbed in particular interests and predilections to inform themselves or to think much about complex city problems. Many of them are not conscious of any feeling for the community as a whole. As a result there is a fractioning of civic interest, which centers on neighborhood and borough matters or on problems that directly affect citizens as members of groups and sections.

But here again there is a general delegation of power which tends toward abdication of self-government or of a truly representative system. Only a small percentage of the persons appearing before the city bodies at public hearings speak in their individual capacities. Most of them are spokesmen for groups—the paid secretaries of organizations representing special interests—and their representations are limited to instructions received from boards of directors or special committees. Only when matters of wide popular interest arise is there much publicity or general concern.

This does not mean that New York suffers from political inertia. The body politic is probably as responsive here as anywhere in the country, when vital issues are presented. One weakness, of course, is the political system which makes it difficult for independent candidates to attain office. That New Yorkers do not take more interest in their government may be due in part to a realization that most of the social and economic problems cannot be solved in City Hall and that local government itself has become complicated beyond ordinary comprehension.

Nevertheless, in the field of government as in other matters, the trend is toward greater unity and closer integration. Mayor O'Dwyer during his first two years in office moved along this path. He took the city's airports out of the Department of Marine and Aviation and turned them over to the Port of New York Authority to be operated as parts of a regional system.

O'Dwyer's methods have differed considerably from those of LaGuardia. He seems genuinely interested in promoting real teamwork and in further co-ordinating the operations of the various departments of the city government. One innovation has been the holding of informal meetings at the Gracie Mansion, where various officials are brought together to thrash out matters of policy and present their problems to the Mayor. These conferences have been more productive than formal meetings at City Hall and more in keeping with the dominant characteristics of the Mayor, who has a keen historic sense and feels strongly about the city. Mayor O'Dwyer knows more about New York's history than most native-born New Yorkers. While still in his teens and studying for the priesthood in Salamanca, Spain, he read Washington Irving's description of the area around the Gracie Mansion as well as *Astoria*, which Irving finished

at John Jacob Astor's place near by. The realistic politician and executive quickly turns romantic and poetic as he tells visitors to the Mayor's house about the days when the place was a stockade, or how after Archibald Gracie built the house someone scratched "Millie, 1815" on one of the window panes. He will go on to tell of New York's part in developing America and what it all means. The story seems to take on new meanings as the present occupant of the Gracie Mansion retells it.

Part Four: » MAKING DOLLARS
MORE DEMOCRATIC

Chapter Sixteen



Wall Street Started from Scratch

THE key word and central theme of New York's story, from the days of wampum to the World Bank, is "money." The threads of gold running through the city's history may be tarnished, but they still carry patterns set in the beginning when Wall Street was the cradle, as it is today the center of modern capitalism.

To most people, including millions of New Yorkers, Wall Street is a place of mystery—sinister or otherwise, depending on the point of view. Yet the financial district has an atmosphere suggesting stability and calm confidence. Trinity and St. Paul's stand out among the surrounding skyscrapers partly because of their graveyards, but these aged structures impose dignity on the section. There is little evidence of hurry or strain, and since the Curb Exchange moved out of Broad Street into its own building the area has been relatively quiet, even during the short business day. Certainly there is nothing to suggest dens of iniquity or that the operations of The Street are suspect.

It is curious that many Americans, as innocent of Communistic leanings as of a knowledge of economics, regard the buying and selling of stocks and bonds as sinful or contrary to the credo under which a hardy people prospered through the sweat of their collective brow, induced by hard, honest toil. After all, settling and developing America was a stock-selling job. Sir Walter Raleigh's enterprises in Virginia and the Massachusetts Bay Company were share-holder operations, the Pilgrims had to show share certificates to get aboard ship at Plymouth, and Henry Hudson worked for such a company.

Somebody bought stocks before anybody sailed for these shores, and Americans were grub-staked by European stockholders long after they had established a Stock Exchange of their own. It was in old Amsterdam that the first active stock exchange dealings in shares occurred; the Dutch organized the first central banking system and developed bearer securities, and Dutch advisers to William

of Orange laid the foundation of English finance, based largely on loot from the Spanish Main.

Under the Dutch, New York probably would have had an exchange and other related facilities much earlier, but the British crown prohibited financial institutions in the Colonies. That is why Wall Street had to start from scratch after the Revolution. Seven years of British occupation, two great fires, complete paralysis of shipping, and the exodus of wealthy loyalists had left New York in a deplorable condition. The immediate need was for sound money and credit. In 1784, five years before George Washington was inaugurated as the first President, Alexander Hamilton established New York's first bank. Hamilton wrote the provisions, but the state at first refused to authorize the bank and it operated without a charter until 1791.

In Europe banks were established before people traded in securities. Here it was necessary to sell securities to establish banks. The Bank of New York started with capital of \$500,000 in \$1,000 shares, many of which were sold in the wharf market at the foot of Wall Street. As a mark of confidence, the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York subscribed for a share. The bank was opened in the Walton mansion at St. George's Square (later 156 Pearl Street, at Franklin Square), under the shadow of Brooklyn Bridge.¹

New York's first bank was without competition until 1798, but in those days merchants and mercantile agents performed many of the functions later taken over by the bankers. They helped to revive the waterfront activities, but the founding of the Federal government and the beginnings of Wall Street were inextricably intertwined. Alexander Hamilton, as Secretary of the Treasury, unified the United States currency and funded the national and state debts with 6 per cent bonds. The \$80,000,000 in bonds authorized by Congress in 1790 were the first important securities offered to American investors. Some of these bonds were sold at the wharf market at the foot of Wall Street, where imports, including rum and slaves, were auctioned. In this way the new Federal government was financed and the New York Stock Exchange started. With the government's credit established and sound money in circulation, the United States became a going concern. What had happened in Wall Street enhanced the nation's prestige abroad and was the basis of the real unity of interests of the newly federated states.

The selling of government bonds naturally stimulated the brokerage business,

¹ This mansion was regarded as the finest dwelling in colonial America. It was three stories high, built of Holland brick and brownstone, and its gardens extended to the East River. Besides setting the style of the other brownstone mansions, its magnificence was cited in Parliament as proof that the Colonies were not being impoverished by British restrictions on their trade. William Walton, who built the dwelling, was president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1775, but he was a loyalist and fled the country after the Revolution.

and in 1791 twenty-four brokers got together under the celebrated butterwood tree at 68-70 Wall Street and established a curb market. The next year the brokers agreed upon the commissions they would charge. In 1792 they met at the office of Samuel Beebe, at 21 Broad Street, and formed the New York Stock and Exchange Board. The initiation fee was \$25. Among the familiar and highly respectable names listed were Barclay, Bleecker, and Cortlandt. The Exchange met at various places until finally it rented the front room on the upper floor of the Tontine Coffee House at 40 Wall Street. Ten years later it moved to the Merchants' Exchange at Wall and Hanover streets.

The brokerage business received its second big boost when the Federal government had to issue more bonds at the outbreak of the War of 1812, but the brokers did not formally organize as an association until 1817, after a precarious existence of several years. In 1822, along with the banks and insurance companies, they fled to Greenwich Village to escape the yellow fever epidemic; this explains the naming of Bank Street in the Village. When lower Manhattan was swept by fire in 1835 the embryonic Exchange met in basements, attics, warehouses, and even haylofts.

Meantime, however, the country had enjoyed a spasmodic prosperity, with New York and Wall Street providing the leadership, money, and credit for various enterprises. Waterfront traders, with government help, were fast overcoming the handicaps of the new nation in developing foreign trade. Tariffs helped, but the first marked expansion of activities came with the opening of the China market. First Boston, then New York, concentrated on this trade.

There was an apparently unlimited demand for tea, but there wasn't enough gold or silver to pay for it. This problem was solved, in part, by the exchange of furs and other commodities for tea and Chinese goods. To aid the traders the government gave importers up to eighteen months to pay the duties on the imports. The traders put up bonds and paid interest, but the subsidy was substantial. New York benefited enormously, especially John Jacob Astor, who was fast becoming New York's leading merchant and its richest capitalist and realty owner.²

Other New Yorkers also were making money. Aaron Burr, who had distinguished himself as a soldier and lawyer, was the leading anti-Federalist in the city. Crafty as well as brilliant, Burr decided to start a bank to compete with his rival, Hamilton. Burr, who had been re-elected to the State Assembly in 1798, secured a charter for a water company; providing that "the surplus capital might be employed in any way not inconsistent with the laws and Constitution of the United States or the laws of the State of New York." In this way New

² The government had lost \$250,000,000 in duties by 1823. See Arthur D. Howden Smith, *John Jacob Astor* (Philadelphia and London: J. P. Lippincott Co., 1929).

York's second bank, the Manhattan (Water) Company, was established at 40 Wall Street, where it is still located in the second tallest building in the financial district.³

New York was hard hit by the embargoes on shipping, which shifted interest from foreign trade to internal transportation and development. In this movement John Jacob Astor provided the leadership and was the first real giant of Wall Street. Before the British posts on the Great Lakes were removed, Astor sold furs through Montreal. Later he worked with Canadian traders and used all manner of shrewd tricks in developing his trade with China, outwitting American as well as British competitors. But Astor was a man of vision, with a genius for organization. He was severely practical and at every stage kept in step or ahead of developments affecting his interests. He created techniques in finance and exploitation which were to be followed by many successors in Wall Street.

The Louisiana Purchase provided Astor with opportunities far greater than the opening of the Great Lakes. The reports of Lewis and Clark were quickly translated into a prospectus for the American Fur Company and its subsidiaries. Astor immediately began constructing a chain of trading posts along the Great Lakes and to the Mississippi; up the Missouri to the Rockies and down the Columbia to the Pacific, where he built Astoria as a haven for his China ships.

Astor had a station in the Sandwich Islands, and St. Louis was the center for the east-west overland and river routes. He did business with the Russians, as did his Canadian competitors. When the pioneers started west in their covered wagons and were in turn followed by the railroad builders, they all used the trails of empire blazed by Astor's fur traders and added eleven states to the Union. By 1810 Astor was, next to Stephen Girard of Philadelphia, the richest man in the United States. When the Federal government issued \$16,000,000 in bonds to finance the War of 1812, Astor, Girard, and David Paris subscribed \$10,000,000. They bought at 80 and a year after the war, sold at 120, but Astor lost Astoria after his strenuous efforts to establish this post on the Pacific, when, in spite of the agitation under the slogan "54-40 or Fight," the nation without a fight accepted the 49th parallel as its northern boundary west of the Great Lakes. Astor lost \$202,000 on his Astoria project, but he made an equal amount when his ship the "Beaver" sailed to China, despite the embargo, under a special permit. The Astor ship was supposed to be taking home a distinguished mandarin, but it was alleged that the high personage was a waterfront coolie dressed up for the occasion!

Astor had close connections with the Federal government. He was made a director of the Bank of the United States in 1816 and had become more of a

³ The New York Dry Dock Company (the Eleventh Ward Bank) later received a charter to last "as long as grass grows and water flows."

financier than a merchant. With John Hone, John Robins, and Nathaniel Prime he arranged the Ohio Canal loan, and he made substantial investments in other enterprises as well as in real estate. The United States had begun to recover from the embargoes and the War of 1812 when England pressed her war against Napoleon. American foodstuffs supplied Wellington in his Peninsular campaigns. This created a demand for the opening up of new land and for improved transportation, but the methods of financing those developments were crude and wasteful as well as scandalous.

The "American System" of Henry Clay, backed by John Quincy Adams and based on financing internal improvements by tariffs and the selling of public land, never got well started. The Federal government remained weak, and the Bank of the United States could not meet the nation's needs. Internal development was left to the individual states, which thereupon authorized all kinds of exploitation. The market was flooded with dubious securities, thus creating alternate booms and panics.

Andrew Jackson's crusade against the Bank of the United States, together with the panic of 1837 which followed—caused in part by the banks themselves—left the country in a bad way. New York, however, had long before become the gateway to the continent as well as the center of finance, and the embargoes were a challenge to the initiative and enterprise of the city. One effect of its accelerated activity was a more extensive use of Boston Post Road and a spreading of the city northward. A new connection over the Harlem River brought profit to many New Yorkers, including Gouverneur Morris and Aaron Burr. The latter made enough money on lots along the new route to buy Richmond Hill.*

During the War of 1812, New York sent men from her shipyards to build the ships that gave Commodore Perry the victory of Lake Erie. Inland navigation became of vital importance. John Stevens, Nicholas Roosevelt, and other New Yorkers began developing steamboats on the Great Lakes, the Ohio, and the Mississippi. The Livingston-Fulton steamboat monopoly ultimately brought Cornelius Vanderbilt into the railroad business. Most important of all, the paralysis of ocean shipping had put the South Street merchants behind DeWitt Clinton and the Erie Canal. All of these projects required money and credit, and the only way to raise money was through the sale of stocks and bonds. Wall Street flourished.

After the Revolution exchanges had been opened in Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore, but, with the opening of the Erie Canal, New York became the chief capital market. After the canals came the railroads, and by 1840 the New York Stock Exchange was dealing in rails, oils, minerals, manufactures, and utilities. Seats on the Exchange had risen to \$1,000 by 1857, and the members,

* *Valentine's Manual*, 1919-20, edited by Henry Collins Brown (New York: Valentine Company, 1920).

in high hats and frock coats, were meeting in Lord's Court Building when Wall Street experienced the worst of the early panics.

Details of the panic of 1857 make familiar reading to those who remember the Big Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. In that earlier period the country had been slow in recovering from the panic of 1837, but the Mexican War, followed by the annexation of the Southwest and the discovery of gold in California, set off another boom. The Crimean War, like the British campaign against Napoleon and later wars in Europe, created an increased demand for American grain. More new land was opened up; railroad building was resumed on a larger scale; banks were multiplied and an orgy of speculation was inaugurated, with the inevitable climax of bankruptcies, the closing of banks, and general unemployment and distress. The indiscriminate chartering of banks and other enterprises by the various states and the absence of effective controls—either state or Federal—were responsible for much of the trouble.

Attempted reforms were of little real help. Martin Van Buren, as Governor of New York, tried a notable experiment in 1829 with his Safety Fund law—something like the present Bank Deposit Insurance law—but only Federal action could do what the state was attempting. The Free Banking Act of 1838, aimed at the practice of withholding bank charters unless the sponsors had the right political backing, was misused, but under it New York City secured some non-political banks. The first real Wall Street reforms, however, date from the Civil War and from "Black Friday," September 24, 1869.

In the early days of Wall Street the leading financiers were merchants and land owners. Next to John Jacob Astor, John Robins, the dry goods merchant, was the richest man in town, but the depression of 1837 produced a rival in Alexander Turney Stewart, a Scotch Presbyterian, born in County Antrim, Ireland, in 1803. Stewart first visited New York in 1820 and came back three years later to claim an inheritance of \$5,000, with part of which he started a shop on lower Broadway, selling Irish lace.

By 1837 A. T. Stewart had accumulated sufficient capital to buy out several bankrupt merchants and built the largest store in the city, at Broadway and Chambers Street. Following the northward growth of the city, he later opened the greatest of retail stores then in existence, in what is now a part of Wanamaker's. During the Civil War, Stewart established offices and warehouses in many cities and did a large business for the government.

Some of Stewart's profits went into the historic Globe Theater, Niblo's Garden, and the Metropolitan Hotel. He also owned the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga. President Grant wanted to make Stewart Secretary of the Treasury, but the law prohibited a Cabinet officer from engaging in business. Stewart offered to turn his interests over to trustees and give his profits to charity, but a bill to legalize his appointment was never passed.

A. T. Stewart lived until 1876 and engaged in many enterprises, including the purchase of Hempstead Plains, where he built the model town of Garden City in 1869 and projected a railroad connection with New York. Stewart's relative position in the financial community was indicated, during the Civil War, when he offered to give as much to the Sanitary Commission as Cornelius Vanderbilt. Both at length subscribed \$100,000. Stewart sent a shipload of provisions to Ireland during the famine of 1847 and brought back a shipload of immigrants for whom he found work. He also sent a ship load of flour to France after the Franco-Prussian War, gave \$10,000 for the relief of English mill workers in 1862, and contributed \$50,000 to sufferers in the Chicago fire.

Russell Sage, born in 1816, went to work for his brother at the age of twelve. At twenty-one he bought out the store, sold it at a profit, and started a wholesale grocery business. After serving two terms in Congress in 1852-56, he added banking to his other activities and, through a chance meeting with Jay Gould, became interested in railroad financing. With Cyrus W. Field, Sage and Gould secured control of the New York elevated lines in 1881.

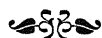
Sage was shrewd and conservative. In the latter part of his life he was primarily a money lender and is said to have had \$27,000,000 out on call at one time. The only time he was caught short was in 1884, when he lost \$7,000,000 in the minor panic of that year. In 1891 Sage was seriously injured by Henry W. Norcross, who on being refused a loan of \$1,200,000 exploded a bomb in Sage's office. Norcross and a clerk were killed. Sage narrowly escaped and lived until 1906. The Sage Foundation was financed by his fortune, estimated at \$70,000,000.

In many ways Peter Cooper was the most remarkable of the men whose daring experiments and practical application of ideas laid the foundations and evolved the industrial and capitalistic system of this early day. Cooper himself did not like certain aspects of that system and had radical ideas for changing it. His social ideas were equally radical. He was born in 1791, on Little Dock Street, near Astor's first fur store. At an early age he demonstrated his mechanical genius, but he, too, got his financial start by running a grocery store near where Cooper Union now stands. His next venture was in the glue business, which brought him a fortune, but in the meantime he had branched out in all directions.

Cooper's iron works in Trenton became the most important in the country, and he was the first ironmaster to use anthracite to puddle iron. He invented the endless chain method to control water in canals, his foundry was the first to cast structural iron beams, and he built the first locomotive in America. He backed the Atlantic Cable, fought Tammany Hall, ran for President on a currency reform program, urged public works to provide employment, and—although himself almost illiterate—founded a great free educational institution.

Peter Cooper became a millionaire during a period when the wildest kinds of speculative orgies were followed by scandals, yet no one ever charged that he made a dollar in such operations. And others later made far more than he ever did from inventions and processes of his contriving. He called himself simply "a mechanic of New York," but he was perhaps the foremost, as he was the most ethical, of early New York industrial and financial leaders.

Chapter Seventeen



The Rendezvous of Ideas and Money

THE development of steamboats was an early and significant example of Wall Street's function in providing a market for ideas as well as for securities. The fascinating story of the steamboat has been told many times but never better than by James Thomas Flexner, who declares that "acceptance of this discovery involved a major change in the thinking of mankind."¹ The steamboat offered irrefutable evidence, which everyone could understand, that it was within man's power to better his lot by applying scientific knowledge to human problems.

Poor John Fitch, who invented and operated a steam packet on the Delaware in 1786, got little encouragement in New York, but he stimulated the interest of John Stevens and the latter's brother-in-law, Chancellor Livingston, in steam navigation. Livingston experimented with steamboats for a decade, and secured a monopolistic charter to operate vessels of this type on the Hudson River in 1798, long before he met Robert Fulton. His charter was renewed three times before the initial trial of the "Clermont." The incentive was thus provided in advance for Fulton's efforts. "To produce the first useful steamboat," Fulton himself wrote, "it required the fortunate circumstances of adequate genius and capital in the same person or persons."

Wall Street has been creating opportunities for such combinations ever since. Some measure of the financial community's contribution to national development may be had by reading the stock and bond listings in the financial pages of the daily newspapers. An interesting volume could be written about almost every item. In sum they constitute a comprehensive record of material progress.

It is often said that Wall Street produces nothing and that the whole capital-

¹ James Thomas Flexner, *Steamboats Come True* (New York: The Viking Press, 1944). The original name of Fulton's first steamboat was the "North River Steamboat of Clermont."

istic system is based on exploitation by greedy speculators and gamblers. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to imagine what the United States would be like today if there had been no Wall Street. Had the country started with its governmental power so centralized that development of the country could have been directed and controlled from the national capital, we might have avoided a host of mistakes; but we did not start that way.

The Federal government was not given control over the energies and resources of the new nation. Every effort was made to keep the central government poor and weak—without power even to regulate national activities of a public nature. In practically every field development was left to private interests or to the states, which were also poor. The only way in which private enterprise and public improvements and other large activities could be financed was by borrowing small sums from large numbers of people.

It was essential to create mechanisms, to centralize operations, and to build up reservoirs of capital before money could flow into any large undertaking, public or private. Under New York leadership what we now call Wall Street provided those facilities. That is why New York became the dominant factor in developing America, and it also helps to explain why Wall Street exercised such power over the government before wars and depressions compelled the government to intervene and regulate basic financial and economic operations.

Early in the last century anthracite was discovered in the Pennsylvania hills. After being tested and found to be superior to soft coal for many purposes, it came into use in Philadelphia and New York. Here was something new and useful. Philip Hone, Robert Livingston, John Stevens, and other New Yorkers became interested. A canal was the only practical method of getting the new fuel to market. Hone, at a meeting at Tontine Coffee House, was one of the organizers of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company. He became president of the company, sold securities, and built a canal from Rondout, on the Hudson, to Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Hone took Washington Irving up to Honesdale with him, and one of the features of the town, Irving Cliff, was named for the most celebrated public relations man of his time.

Honesdale is some sixteen miles from Carbondale, where anthracite was first mined, and there are steep hills between the two. To get the coal from the mines to the canal terminal, cars were pulled up the hills by cables and lowered by gravity. It was an ingenious arrangement—and one used in other places during the period—but it had many drawbacks. Later, when locomotives were developed in England, Hone sent Horatio Allen over to buy two of the new iron horses.²

² Horatio Allen had graduated from Columbia College in 1823 and was only twenty-six when he was sent on this mission. Later he was to construct the South

One of the locomotives was taken to the Stevens Institute in New Jersey for study. The other, the Stourbridge Lion, was tried out on the tracks of the Gravity Rail Road, just outside Honesdale, on August 8, 1828. This was the first locomotive to be operated in America, but the experiment was not a success; the iron wheels were too heavy for the wooden rails. This particular problem was solved by Robert Livingston Stevens, who at an early age had begun assisting his father, John Stevens, and had played an important part in developing steamboat engines. Robert Stevens went to England in 1830 to study the Liverpool and Manchester Railroad. Returning to America on the same ship with Samuel Finley Breese Morse, Stevens evolved the idea of the T-rail, which could be fastened to ties with spikes. It was stronger and cheaper than the rails formerly used and, along with the flanged wheel, solved the problem of keeping trains on the tracks. Peter Cooper was to make T-rails and build a locomotive, as well as the first cast-iron pillars used in American building construction.

John Stevens made the first use of anthracite to raise steam in his tubular marine boilers. He built many steamboats and originated ferryboats in their present form. The Federal government bought a percussion shell invented by Stevens, after it had been tried out in New York harbor on a vessel especially built for the purpose. With his brother Edwin, John Stevens next constructed the Stevens Battery, an iron-clad steam vessel designed to withstand his percussion shells. This ship, ten years ahead of the ironclads used by the French in 1854, was never launched but lay in the basin at Hoboken for many years.

With the development of the locomotive, the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company became a railroad, its first rights of way to the coal fields following the old canal. In 1869 the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad was opened; it ran from Binghamton to Albany and connected with the D. & H., which held \$500,000 of the stock. The fight over control of this 140-mile line ultimately brought J. Pierpont Morgan the elder into the railroad business.

Cyrus West Field came to New York from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, at the age of fifteen, and became a partner in the paper manufacturing firm of E. Root & Co., when he was twenty-one. When the firm failed in 1841, Field and his brother-in-law formed a new company. In nine years they had paid off all the debts of the Root concern, and Field retired from business with a fortune of \$250,000 at the age of thirty-three. Later Field with Peter Cooper and other New Yorkers organized the American group that backed the transatlantic cable in 1854. Millions were sunk beneath the Atlantic as the cable broke time after time, but Field and his supporters persisted and after four attempts the line was

Carolina Railroad and build the first locomotive for sale in the United States at his West Point Foundry. He was the principal engineer for the Croton Aqueduct, became president of the Erie Railroad in 1843, and was consulting engineer in the construction of Brooklyn Bridge and on the Panama Canal project.

opened with a two-day celebration in New York in 1858. There was more trouble, but the cable was definitely a success by 1866. Field organized the city's elevated railroads in 1877 and made more money, but he lost his fortune at the age of seventy-two. His friends considered him too visionary and generous. He lived at Gramercy Park and had a home at Irvington-on-the-Hudson, which he named Ardsley after the home of his grandparents in Yorkshire, England.

Samuel Finley Breese Morse was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and had distinguished himself as an artist before coming to New York in 1823. While professor of painting and sculpture at New York University, a position he held for life, Morse perfected his telegraph. Alfred Vail was his partner and the principal backer of this invention until 1843, when Congress voted \$30,000 for an experimental telegraph line from Washington to Baltimore, built by Ezra Cornell. The famous message, "What hath God wrought," was sent over this line on May 24, 1844, and the government was expected to buy the invention for \$100,000, but when Postmaster General Cave Johnson advised against this the development of the telegraph was left to private enterprise, which meant Wall Street.

It was in J. P. Morgan's office that the news was received when Colonel George Washington Roebling, of Brooklyn Bridge fame, using an observation balloon, reported the movement of Lee's army on Gettysburg. At that time the Atlantic cable was operated by the International Ocean Telegraph Company. Jay Gould secured control of this company and leased it to the Western Union Telegraph Company, which he also dominated. Morgan first backed the Mexican Telegraph Company and ultimately became director and the most important factor in the expanded Western Union. Alexander Graham Bell's first patents were for improved telegraph receivers and transmitters. He never lived in New York, and the original Bell Telephone Company was formed in Boston, but it was J. P. Morgan of New York who merged the rival companies and ultimately created the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. The first transcontinental telephone line, from New York to San Francisco was opened in 1915.

As a banker, J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr., was alert to every opportunity to make money for himself and for those who made investments through him, but he did not have profits in mind when he drove over to Menlo Park in 1881 to see Thomas A. Edison, whose electric light had been much publicized. Morgan wanted to find out if electric lights could be used in private residences.³

Mr. Morgan installed a stationary engine under a stable back of his home at 219 Madison Avenue and had his gas fixtures wired for electricity. For several years there was endless trouble. The wiring was defective and a bad fire was narrowly averted; the neighbors complained of the noise, of fumes that tarnished their silver, and of the cats attracted by the warmth of the boiler. The

³ Herbert G. Satterlee, *J. Pierpont Morgan* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939).

family and their guests were sometimes left in the dark when the engineer had let the steam get low. But Mr. Morgan had faith in the electric light, and when the first Edison plant was erected in Pearl Street he had his office wired. Here he accused the meter of theft until it was found that the cleaner was using the precious light at night. Tired of his crude plant at home, Morgan backed the construction of a branch power plant uptown. Before long he invested \$50,000 in an electric plant in Brooklyn and helped provide other cities with electricity. In time, Morgan was to organize these utility companies and create a holding company on the pattern of the Northern Securities Company. In 1927, the Electric Bond and Share Company was written up from \$148,501,290 to \$547,103,118.

Morgan took the same interest in Edison's talking machine as he did in the telegraph; he had one in his home in 1890, when they were still in the experimental stage. Later he helped organize the first phonograph company. Morgan not only installed a private wire in his office and was one of the earliest users of the telegraph for business, but he also had a wire in his home and with the teletype was always in close touch with business affairs at home and with his family when at his office. His interest in cable, telegraph, and telephone companies, was due in part to the extensive use his company made of the facilities themselves. He was also instrumental in forming the General Electric Company and in securing innumerable industrial grants that grew out of discoveries and inventions.

The original Stock Exchange Board was reorganized in 1869 to take in the Open Board of Brokers, a group formed in protest against the secrecy of the Exchange. The new organization also included the Government Bond Department, formed originally to handle Civil War bonds. The membership was later raised from 1,060 to 1,100, where it remained until February 7, 1929, at the height of the Great Boom, when the membership was increased to 1,375 and the price of seats rose to as high as \$625,000. Today 90 per cent of all the shares in American corporations are sold on the New York Stock Exchange. The machinery that enables the Exchange to transact such a tremendous volume of business is elaborate, and it functions with great efficiency. The use of the telegraph was an important factor in creating a single American market for securities. Business was further increased and accelerated by the use of cables and the telephone and later by the employment of stock tickers, teletypes, and radio.

The telephone immediately led to branch brokerage offices. The first was located in 23rd Street and had a private wire. It soon attracted customers, who at first after phoning their orders would drive in cabs to Wall Street to see if these had been executed.⁴ By 1927, members of the Exchange had 962

⁴ E. H. H. Simmons, *Financing American Industry, and Other Addresses* (New York: [New York Stock Exchange] 1930).

branches in 292 cities in forty-one states and four foreign countries, mostly with leased wires. The Exchange had 5,547 stock and 882 bond tickers. A transaction on the New York Exchange is recorded in San Francisco 30 seconds later. Bond issues totaling 1,481 and 1,081 issues of shares were listed on the Big Board before the smash of 1929. The Security Collateral Loan Market is another important part of the Stock Exchange.

The Exchange itself is merely a market and auction room where securities instead of goods are bought and sold at prevailing prices. Generally speaking, these prices are based on demand, but they are influenced by many factors. The market can be manipulated, and there have been many scandals through which the investors and the public have suffered; but the Stock Exchange, as a market, is highly efficient.

Not only did Wall Street provide a market for the securities issued to finance canals, railroads, highways, and other early enterprises, but it also imported capital. Since Europe needed the surplus foodstuffs and other goods which the United States could produce, a great deal of foreign capital therefore went into those enterprises. This resulted in a spreading of prosperity here and abroad on a scale never before equaled. The rapid rise in Europe's population after 1870 is attributed to the increased food supply made possible by the development in American agriculture, railroads, and other enterprises financed largely through Wall Street—though much of the capital came from abroad.

The wild-cat railroad schemes, land grabbing, and other scandals of the period are another side of the story, and one often told. The tale of how these speculative orgies came about, and of the efforts to correct and prevent such abuses, is not so familiar. The Stock Exchange, as a market, was the victim rather than the cause of those machinations.

John D. Rockefeller's oil company, an Ohio concern, at first financed locally, would seem to have been one great American industry of the period that owed nothing to Wall Street. But New York built the Erie Canal in the first place, thus making Cleveland a center in opening up the area around the Great Lakes. That is why Hewitt and Tuttle, forwarding agents, and Clark, Gardner & Co., commission merchants, on Cleveland's docks, were able to employ young John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and give him his start.

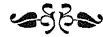
Like the discovery of anthracite coal, the finding of oil in Pennsylvania started a chain of momentous developments. Transportation was essential, and one of Rockefeller's first alliances was with the Lake Shore Railroad. But it was not enough to produce and transport oil; outlets were necessary. Rockefeller took in Charles M. Pratt & Co., of Brooklyn, where he also found H. H. Rogers, A. T. Bedford, and other men who later became Standard Oil generals. A new recruit was Henry Clay Folger, a boyhood friend of Pratt's, who be-

came president of the Standard Oil Company in 1911.⁵ The Standard Oil Company opened its first New York offices at 140 Pearl Street in 1870. Twelve years later it was at 44 Broadway; 26 Broadway did not become famous as its address until after 1885. Rockefeller made deals with both the Erie and the New York Central to bring his oil into New York. By 1893 control of the soft iron ore mines of the Mesabi Range, of the Duluth, Mesabi & Northern Railroad, and of transportation in the smelting region in Pennsylvania was in the hands of Rockefeller. Morgan later brought these properties into the United States steel combine.

Today the range of securities handled in Wall Street is a comprehensive catalogue of world-wide human activities. Although not listed under recognizable names, the most recent advances in science, medicine, and chemistry are registered there as soon as they reach the stage of practical application. Aviation, radio, and the movies are all there, along with public housing bonds. Tomorrow, if the system survives, stocks representing applications of atomic energy may head the list, with World Bank bonds providing an alphabetical conclusion.

⁵ Inspired by Emerson and abetted by his wife, Folger collected Shakespeare folios and editions and presented the nation with the Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library in Washington, the finest collection of its kind in existence, housed in a magnificent building. John K. Winkler, *John D., a Portrait in Oils* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1921).

Chapter Eighteen



Handling Other People's Money

AS DEVELOPED by Wall Street, American capitalism has become a free collectivist system. It is still ineffectively regulated in the public interest, but it is better managed now than ever before. Whether we know it or not, all of us are capitalists and up to our necks in Wall Street. Our money, jobs, and hopes of security are vitally affected by the markets.

There is plenty of poverty in the United States; the average earnings are distressingly low, and at least a third of the nation consists of the underprivileged, who are poorly housed, fed, and clothed. There is periodic unemployment, under which large numbers suffer extreme hardship. These are indictments of the capitalistic system and a measure of its failures. Before we abolish the system, however, we should examine it carefully and consider some of the alternatives proposed.

These alternatives include the police-state systems and various collectivist and co-operative schemes, such as doing away with the "profit motive," "production for use," and the redistribution of wealth. It can hardly be doubted that we reject totalitarianism as too drastic, but it is surprising to find how far capitalism has gone in adopting certain features of the other proposals. Production for use instead of for profit would have no meaning; in New York, where little is produced in the usual sense, the phrase would have to be changed to performing services gratis instead of for remuneration. But, aside from this, capitalism is largely collectivist and co-operative and has led to the widest distribution of wealth yet attained under any system. The money used in Wall Street belongs to the people—the humblest as well as the wealthiest.

An amazing thing about the capitalist system is that so few people realize the part they play in the financial scheme of things. Direct profit sharing and employee ownership of business and industrial enterprises are still rare in individual concerns, but indirectly and in the larger sense they are the basis of the present system. The process by which this has come about is not usually

emphasized, but it is not a secret. Wall Street and American capitalism are really operating with our money. There is a difference between stocks and bonds, but the money that goes into both represents savings. Stocks are supposed to represent venture capital; bonds are considered safer, but people can lose money on bonds as well as on stocks. Shares in some companies are better investments than some bonds, but in the main the difference between bonds and stocks may be compared to that between a first and second mortgage.

Individuals make and lose fortunes in Wall Street. The big-money people have tremendous power and frequently misuse it. Some are mere gamblers; others are shrewd schemers who exploit the labor of others. No way has yet been found to prevent such abuses, but income and excess profits taxes are powerful weapons and, if properly used, are effective curbs on profits derived from monopolies and other special sources of wealth. Nevertheless finance, like farming, involves risks, and someone must provide venture capital to keep the mechanism going.

An interesting thing about the system is that the people, meaning all of us, take fewer risks and actually gain more, relatively, than the initial investors. In the main, the people's savings are not invested in an enterprise until it has become successful and there is real value behind the bonds. But how many Americans with insurance policies, savings bank accounts, and other savings think of themselves as bondholders or actual owners of railroads and other great businesses? Yet, when a group of bankers market an issue of bonds, most of them go to insurance and trust companies, savings banks, and other institutions that hold funds in trust.

Although Wall Street has the biggest banks in the world and is the financial home of most of the large corporations, the greatest reservoirs of "private" capital in the United States are the insurance companies and savings banks. With the exception of the Federal Reserve Bank, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company is the largest corporation in New York and in the country. In 1946 the Metropolitan had assets of \$7,796,547,782, with 44,989,746 life insurance policies and certificates outstanding.¹

To keep this immense business going it is necessary for the Metropolitan to find profitable investments for about \$2,000,000 a day. Over a long period the investing of these funds was directed by Frederick H. Ecker, who was born in Brooklyn and started with the company in 1883—the year Brooklyn Bridge was opened. Mr. Ecker sought to retire when he reached the age of 70, in 1937, but agreed to remain as chairman of Metropolitan provided no salary was paid him.²

¹ Marquis James, *The Metropolitan Life* (New York: The Viking Press, 1947).

² Mr. Ecker draws a retirement annuity of \$30,385.56 a year. Previously, as president and chairman, his pay averaged \$173,000 a year.

The Insurance Company of North America was New York's first concern of this kind, and it was doing business in 1800. Wall Street, however, had a Tontine Association much earlier. Tontine was devised by Dr. Lorenzo Tonti, of Naples, who offered the plan to the French government as a means of raising revenue. Under the original scheme an annuity was shared equally by subscribers to a loan; with the death of successive subscribers the shares of those remaining increased until, at the end, the last subscriber received the entire remainder. Charlotte Barbier, the ultimate survivor of the first tontine, won 74,000 livres on a 300-livre investment and started a craze that swept Europe and made insurance a gamble in America until tontine was finally abolished here.

The Tontine Association in 1791 built at Wall and Water streets a Coffee House which, next to Fraunces' Tavern, was the most important meeting place in New York. The Chamber of Commerce was housed there; such enterprises as the Erie Canal, the Park Theater, Stevens's steamboat, the Delaware and Hudson Canal, and the New York Water Company were promoted at the Coffee House; and Trinity Church lots and the old City Hall were auctioned there.

After 1800 the number of insurance companies, banks and trust companies, and other financial institutions vastly increased. All were engaged in much the same activities—promoting enterprises with varying degrees of success, over-expanding, and collapsing as the country swung from booms to depressions. The Metropolitan, the New York Life, the Mutual, the Prudential, the Equitable, and other insurance companies are all huge investors of savings. In the long history of Wall Street, the insurance and "trust" companies have been as important in financial matters as the banks.

In the modern sense, those first insurance companies were not primarily insurance institutions. Most of them were highly speculative concerns, the officers and stockholders of which used the money collected from policyholders as it suited their purpose. It was the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company—which had not sold insurance in years—that set off the panic of 1857; it had become involved in land speculation. There were many subsequent scandals, which finally led to the Armstrong Investigation of 1903, which sent Charles Evans Hughes to the Governor's mansion at Albany and later to Washington as Chief Justice of the United States.

One of the scandals grew out of a row between James W. Alexander, president of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, and young James Hazen Hyde, whose father had left him controlling stock worth \$25,000,000. This stock passed first to Thomas Fortune Ryan, but control later went to J. Pierpont Morgan, who mutualized the company and appointed Grover Cleveland as

one of the public trustees. Morgan also had a hand in reorganizing the New York Life and Mutual Life companies.

The first New York Savings Bank was chartered in March, 1818, after having been refused a charter the year before. Opposition to it was overcome by the promoters, who organized a "Society for the Prevention of Pauperism." That there was a real need for such a bank was shown at once. The first evening it was opened \$2,801 was deposited, and the deposits reached \$153,378 in six months. The Farmers' Fire Insurance and Loan Company (1822) and the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company (1830) were beginners in the business, but the first real trust company was the United States Trust Company, established at 40 Wall Street in 1853, with Peter Cooper as an incorporator.³ The First National Bank was opened in 1863 to help finance the Civil War.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company grew out of the National Union Life and Limb Insurance Company, chartered during the Civil War as a kind of war-risk insurance. The company started business at 243 Broadway, opposite City Hall Park, on July 21, 1864, after buying \$3,680.66 worth of furniture. By the end of that year seventeen life and fifty-six accident policies had been written for premiums totaling \$3,687.76. In 1945 the Metropolitan Life had \$3,656,411,000, or 48.4 per cent of its assets in United States securities.

Although their business is both national and international in character, the larger insurance companies are primary factors in the operations of the capitalistic system. Along with savings banks and other lending institutions, they provide a large percentage of the money invested in all enterprises, public and private. Until sound policies and effective controls were established, abuses in the insurance business were as common as those in banking and in the Stock Exchange. This was true also of the New York savings banks. Both banking and insurance are now unified in various ways and are being gradually merged, and the savings banks are selling insurance and insuring deposits. In effect the big lending institutions are standing pools of capital which may be drawn upon for enterprises approved by law.

The beginnings of the Clearing House were as simple and logical as those of the Stock Exchange. By the middle of the nineteenth century New York had some sixty banks employing porters to collect and pay out money as required to balance their accounts with each other. The porters are said to have adopted the practice of meeting and reaching balances between themselves, thus saving work. At any rate, the New York banks in 1856, established a Clearing House, the first in the country. By an efficient system of exchange the enormous business of the banks is simplified. Checks totaling \$10,000,000,000 a week may be balanced against each other. (The daily average of clearings

³ Noble Foster Hodgson, *Epochs in American Banking* (New York: John Day Co., 1929).

in 1947 was \$1,294,682,842.) The Clearing House also makes loans to the government, issues loan certificates, and fixes uniform rates of interest on deposits and exchange and of charges on collections. This unification of the banking machinery was created in time to be of great assistance to the government in financing the Civil War. Today, together with the Federal Reserve Bank, it is the controlling factor in banking.

Before 1914, the United States had in effect borrowed some \$15,000,000,000 from Europe to finance our enterprises. We were paying the interest on this debt by sending goods abroad. Farmers, miners, and other workers in America did not know that they were engaged in foreign trade, but our surpluses were going abroad to pay interest on stocks and bonds issued to build railroads and to finance companies making farm machinery, mining, and engaging in other vital activities. Europe had been making such investments here for a century.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 our whole financial and economic structure was threatened. Had American securities been precipitately dumped on the market the effect would have been disastrous. To prevent such a catastrophe the New York Stock Exchange closed for a time and then re-opened, so that an orderly liquidation could take place. American investors, by buying the American securities held in Europe, lifted the mortgage. Then they began to buy European securities.

This great unseen drama represented the most momentous financial and economic shift in history. In a brief period the United States completely reversed its position from that of a debtor to that of a creditor nation. New York replaced London as the world's financial center, and every aspect of our economy was changed. It has never since been the same. Thereafter American loans to Europe went to pay for the vast amounts of goods we sent abroad. Europe got the goods, but the money stayed here. So long as Europe could pay in gold or goods, we prospered. When this became impossible, we were started toward collapse and the Great Depression.

When the United States entered the war in 1917 financial operations of all kinds were on a scale far transcending anything ever before conceived, with the Federal government as the great borrower. The Allied War Debts, the tremendous sales of Liberty Bonds, and the subsequent retirement of a large part of the national debt; rehabilitation loans to Europe; loans to Latin America and the expansion of American plants—all these were operations of such magnitude that they could only be carried out by such centralization and mobilization of financial resources as were represented by the machinery of Wall Street.

Although government exercised greater control over finance during and after the First World War, the management of the national economy left much to be desired. Creation of the Federal Reserve System made it possible to finance the First World War without serious difficulty, but it failed to check the orgy

of speculation which ended in the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the panic of 1933. The boom in the twenties and the crash that followed grew out of the cheap money policy of the Federal Reserve Board in Washington. Instead of raising the rediscount rate, as advocated by the Federal Reserve Bank in New York, the Board in February, 1929, merely "warned" member banks against borrowing from the Federal Reserve Banks to make speculative loans.

Stocks continued to rise, but by March call money also became scarce and dear. The effect was to cause a slump in the stock market. This led to a dramatic clash between the New York banks and the Federal Reserve Board. Charles E. Mitchell, President of the National City Bank and a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, defied the Board and poured \$25,000,000 into the call money market. This action, which caused the market to rally, is said to have postponed the crash for seven months.⁴ Other banks followed the Mitchell lead, and the market went wild as stocks mounted to dizzy heights and then collapsed. This was more than three years before the bank panic occurred, but it was the beginning of the end for a system that had grown too big and was too dangerous to be allowed to continue without real controls.

The bank panic, the great depression, and the efforts of the Roosevelt administration to correct abuses and end the boom-and-bust cycle are all familiar. At times, however, it seems that common knowledge of Wall Street is limited to current prices of stocks and old scandals. Charles E. Mitchell was replaced as president of the National City Bank. Richard Whitney, president of the Stock Exchange, actually went to jail, and many other financiers in high places were shorn of their power over other people's money.

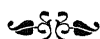
The New Deal reform measures were far-reaching. The Stock Exchange and the issuing of securities were brought under strict governmental regulations. So were the banks, thus ending bad practices which had grown up during the years. Wall Street has not been the same since those long-needed reforms were put into effect. With these changes the real power over finance shifted to Washington. It has often been said, and it is generally assumed, that Wall Street had received a blow from which it could not recover. But the Stock Exchange as a market and Wall Street as the financial center of the world were unimpaired; in fact, they were greatly strengthened.

This stronger position was demonstrated during the Second World War. The financing of this greatest of all wars—the expansion of plants and the organization of production—was a task almost beyond comprehension. In that effort all the resources of the country were merged, and the facilities of Wall Street, as well as the money, credit, and brains of the New York financial center, were used to the full.

⁴ H. W. Baldwin and S. Stone, *We Saw It Happen* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), in chapter by Elliot Bell.

Thus through trial and error, attended by the ruthless practices and weaknesses inherent in our political and social system, techniques and mechanisms have throughout our history been developed to make our financial and economic system work, producing phenomenal material progress and enabling us to emerge victorious in all our wars.

Chapter Nineteen



Wall Street and Big Business

NEW YORK'S pre-eminence as a financial center is attributable in large measure to J. Pierpont Morgan the elder. He expanded laissez-faire capitalism beyond any previous stage, raised the standards of Wall Street, and revealed the possibilities of new forms of finance which may be regulated in the general interest. Morgan also personified Big Business—or rather banker control of business and industry—in all its interrelations, good and bad. He never deigned to defend himself, and his apologists have been few, but in a sense America's productive effort during the global war was a vindication of the man who unified and developed many of the country's basic industries and set the patterns for others.

J. P. Morgan was not democratic and apparently had little faith in the common man, but he was an organizing genius. It took two world wars and a great depression to teach most Americans that the world is a single economic unit. J. P. Morgan knew this before the Civil War, and that fact was the key to many of his acts. He also knew that order and planning, authority and discipline were essential to progress. He did not find these elements in government and he imposed private controls on business and industry to protect his interests and those of his clients.

When the embargoes on coastal shipping increased travel over the Boston Post Road, J. P. Morgan's grandfather, Joseph, gave up farming near Hartford to operate stage coaches and inns. He was soon making money in the hotel business in Hartford and New Haven, but his most profitable venture was undertaken as a founder and director of the Aetna Fire Insurance Company. New York's disastrous fire of 1835 had bankrupted most of the local fire insurance companies. While others were wavering, Joseph Morgan formed a cash pool of \$100,000 and sent agents to New York to pay the claims against Aetna. This gave his

company tremendous prestige, brought in new business at substantially increased rates, and gave Joseph Morgan a profit of \$150,000.¹

Junius Spencer Morgan, J.P.'s father, grew up in Hartford but in 1829 went to Boston, where he received business training as a clerk to Alfred Welles, merchant. Later he held a clerkship in the New York banking house of Morris Ketcham. In 1836, when he was twenty-three, Junius became a partner in the dry-goods firm of Horne, Mathew & Company in Hartford. That same year he married Juliet Pierpont, daughter of John Pierpont, the fiery patriot, poet, and preacher of Boston. In the next year, on April 17, 1837, John Pierpont Morgan was born.

In 1847 Junius Spencer Morgan sold his business in Hartford and became a partner of James M. Beebe, a prominent Boston merchant. This firm was one of the largest in the United States, but Junius Morgan was destined for a still broader field. George Peabody, who began his career as a dry-goods clerk in Massachusetts and later operated stores in many American cities, had established a mercantile banking house in London and had become the chief financial representative of the United States in England. He offered Junius Spencer Morgan a partnership, which was accepted.

J. Pierpont Morgan's education in England and on the continent; above all, his close relations with his father, a pioneer American "international banker"; and his broad training—all these were important factors in the subsequent career of the man who became the leading figure in Wall Street. Among other things, J. P. Morgan learned that finance, like moving goods in trade, consists of securing capital where it is plentiful and making it available where it is in demand; that profits or the prospects of profits are necessary to move capital. He early discerned that stability and confidence are essential to sound finance and that gold was, or could be, the basis of stability, both national and international.

Born in the panic year, 1837, Morgan went to work as a junior clerk for Duncan, Sherman & Co., 11 Pine Street, during the disastrous panic of 1857. This economic collapse created a pattern that was repeated many times until the Big Smash in 1929. George Peabody & Co., hard hit by the panic, had to get help from the Bank of England, and Junius Morgan thought he was going to lose everything he had.

Young J. P. was more optimistic and soon demonstrated his resourcefulness. The cotton business was still good and he went to New Orleans for his firm. Exploring the waterfront, he came across a ship loaded with Brazilian coffee. The skipper could not find the person to whom the coffee had been assigned and wanted to sell it. First getting samples and making sure he had purchasers for the cargo at prices that would provide a good profit, Morgan bought the coffee.

¹ John K. Winkler, *Morgan the Magnificent* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930).

At first his firm disavowed all responsibility, but later it was glad to share the profits. Shortly before the Civil War, J. P. Morgan went into business for himself at 50 Exchange Place. Though otherwise vigorous, he was subject to "fainting spells" or lapses from consciousness that unfitted him for military duty, and he paid for a substitute. He handled American accounts for the Peabody firm, making loans and investments for its clients and building up its business in foreign exchange.²

Mr. Satterlee, his son-in-law, disposes of the story, frequently repeated, that J. P. Morgan's fortune grew out of the sale of condemned firearms during the Civil War. Morgan lent Simon Stevens, a brother of one of his school teachers, \$20,000 which was paid the government for some carbines. Morgan's connection with the matter ended thirty-eight days later, when he was repaid. There was a scandal over the rifles, an investigation by Congress, and a Special Commission appointed by the Secretary of War; there was also a lawsuit against the government, which was won by Stevens, but Morgan was not further involved.

J. P. Morgan's firm bought and sold securities, "bills of exchange, acceptances drawn against bills of lading, and staple products such as grain, dry goods, and British iron." Its business in foreign exchange and gold increased during the Civil War, and the Peabody firm in London was taken over by his father and became J. S. Morgan & Co. With this London connection, J. P. Morgan & Co. became an increasingly important factor in Wall Street and was soon more of a banking than a mercantile firm.

In financing the Civil War, Jay Cooke of Philadelphia was the chief agent of the Federal government. Following the war, the government was faced with the task of refunding its debt. Cooke naturally wanted to handle this refunding. The growing Morgan firm, which had put up gold to stop the building of Confederate ships in England, wanted to share in this refunding and formed an alliance with Francis Martin Drexel of Philadelphia for the purpose. The contest that followed was the beginning of the rivalry between the House of Morgan and its allies and the German-Jewish bankers who became such important factors in Wall Street. Kuhn, Loeb & Co., next to the Morgans, was the most important banking firm in Wall Street. Later the two houses jointly financed such enterprises as the Pennsylvania tunnels in New York.

Britain was more friendly to the Confederacy than to the Union in the Civil War—her expanding textile industry was dependent on Southern cotton—and the purchase of United States Bonds was limited in Britain and on the Continent. Germany was an exception, and by the end of the war a good share of the Civil War bonds to be refunded were held by the Rothschilds in Frankfurt. August Belmont the elder, who had served the Rothschilds in Germany, came to

² Herbert L. Satterlee, *J. Pierpont Morgan* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939).

the United States in 1837 and later became their agent here. Belmont and the Rothschilds became allied with Jay Cooke in the contest with Drexel and Morgan to refund the Civil War bonds. The upshot of the long fight was that the new bond issue was split between the two groups, and the interest rate on the Federal debt was reduced from 6½ to 4 per cent.

Jay Cooke failed in the panic of 1873. August Belmont and his son were later associated with the Morgan interests in many projects. Drexel bought a lot at Broad and Wall streets in 1871 for \$349 a square foot and erected a white marble building, costing \$1,000,000, which became the headquarters of Drexel, Morgan & Company. The present Morgan building, by Livingston and Trowbridge, was erected in 1913. Drexel, Morgan & Company became J. P. Morgan & Company in 1895, and the Paris firm became Morgan, Harjes & Company.

In 1870 George Peabody & Company joined with other bankers in placing a bond issue for the French government. This is said to have been the beginning of what was later called "syndicate banking." Actually it corresponded to the well-known practice of the insurance companies in sharing risks. The following year J. P. Morgan was a member of a committee of New York bankers which went to Washington to secure a share of the government's refunding bonds. Thereafter Morgan & Company assumed leadership in developing "syndicate banking."

J. P. Morgan first became interested in railroads in 1870, when Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, in their fight to control the Erie, tried to wrest the Albany and Susquehanna line from the Delaware and Hudson and New York Central interests. Court injunctions, the seizure of depots and tunnels, and the derailing of rolling stock were features in this conflict, in which over ten thousand men were involved on both sides before Governor Hoffman ordered out the militia and took over the road.

Later, when Fisk and a group of his followers tried to crash a directors' meeting in Albany, they were met at the top of a dark stairway by J. Pierpont Morgan and Joseph H. Ramsey, president of the company. Fisk was knocked off his feet, and his cohorts, assuming that Morgan and Ramsey had reinforcements behind them, gave up the fight. At the meeting which followed, Morgan was made vice-president of the railroad, which was leased to the Delaware and Hudson for ninety-nine years.

Early railroad maps of the United States dramatically illustrate the situation Morgan faced when he entered the field. First a few short lines appear, linking two near-by cities. Then short lines begin to radiate from the more important cities, the roads leading to the coal fields predominating. Later lines begin to cross the continent. There were many parallel lines and even more short roads that seemed to go nowhere in particular. It was an amazing hodge-podge, but the map in 1870 only suggests the chaotic conditions that prevailed.

The basic problem grew out of the dearth of capital in the new country and the lack of concentration and regulation of financing and operation. The period of frenzied finance, so far as the railroads were concerned, did not come in with Thomas Lawson and the muckraking reformers; railroad finance had been "frenzied" from the beginning. Most of the booms and panics from 1837 to 1893 were closely related to railroad building and overbuilding.

The scandals associated with the railroads and their financing have been retold many times, and there are a number of books giving the history of individual railroads and the men who built them, but no single volume could contain the details of how the American railroads developed. Every short stretch of rails has a history of its own. Usually it includes elements of chicanery, political corruption, financial stock-jobbing, outlawry and plain thievery, idealism, heroism, sacrifice, and often tragedy.

Most of the railroads in the United States were financed on a shoe string. The methods of raising money varied considerably. States, municipalities, and the Federal government made contributions in one form or another. Some of the early railroads were profitable and brought prosperity to certain communities; this caused all communities to want them, and it was easy for promoters to get franchises, charters, and local support.

Still there was not enough capital, and we had to get it from abroad—mostly from England, where experienced investors believed in railroads. That was fortunate, because it was an important factor in bringing about order in American railroading. As a result of the spasmodic railroad booms, the United States before 1900 had almost as much railroad trackage as it has required up to now. Yet we did not have a railroad system, and railroads as a means of transportation and a field for safe investment were extremely precarious.

Through J. P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt secured British capital and made the New York Central the best railroad in the country. But the New York Central met keen competition from the Pennsylvania and other roads as it pushed north and westward. Railroad competition is extremely costly and can be ruinous. It was a long time before the Federal government was forced to recognize that public utilities are legalized monopolies and should be under governmental control. Meantime, men who were responsible for investments in railroads, and especially foreign investments, had more than one reason for seeking to end the wasteful competition and to create large, efficient units out of the innumerable short railroads, most of which were financially weak and generally unprofitable.

The railroad giants were busy over a long period linking up short lines to form through systems, which eventually covered the whole country, but in every section there were rival systems and some of the fiercest battles took place over the small roads needed to create monopolies or to give advantage to the through

lines. The fight between Gould and Morgan over control of the Albany and Susquehanna in 1869 was repeated over a long period. There was not the same violence, however, the struggle taking the form of raids on stocks, the watering of stocks, rate wars, the building of rival roads, and financial juggling of all kinds. Jay Gould and Jim Fisk were past masters in their fields, but in the end the Vanderbilt-Morgan interests won out in their fight with Gould. The senseless conflict between the New York Central and the Pennsylvania was also ended by a conference on Morgan's yacht, the "Corsair I."

But Morgan encountered a more formidable antagonist in Edward Henry Harriman. Harriman was born in Jersey City in 1848 and was an office boy in Wall Street at fourteen. At the age of twenty-one he borrowed \$3,000 and bought a seat on the Stock Exchange. He operated a boat on the Hudson between New York and Newburgh in 1870, and two years later he bought and reorganized the Lake Ontario and Southern Railroad. By 1883 he was a director of the Illinois Central, and in 1897 he became chairman of the executive committee of the Union Pacific.³

Morgan's success in handling the New York Central financing, and particularly in selling securities in England, led him to organize a syndicate to market \$40,000,000 first mortgage gold bonds of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which had met with disaster when Jay Cooke failed in 1873. This was some years before the clash between Morgan and Harriman, but it was the beginning of the conflict over control of the transcontinental railroads.

In the eastern railroad field Morgan had already become dominant. He had put the Vanderbilt lines on a sound basis, ended the fight with the Pennsylvania, and reorganized the Baltimore and Ohio, the Chesapeake and Ohio, and the Southern Railway. Later, in 1905, he even reorganized the internationally owned Canton to Hankow railroad and subsequently sold it to the Chinese government. One of his notable battles was over the West Shore Railroad, part of Henry Villard's vast scheme to build a system that would rival both the New York Central and the Erie. The history of the West Shore typifies the kind of wild financing that went on during the period, with attendant losses. Even the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, the most astute of institutional investors, lost money on West Shore stock.

Having won his fight with Jay Gould, Morgan reorganized the Erie and gave that system a continuous route to Chicago. With the eastern situation thus resolved, developments in the West became of paramount interest. James J.

³ In 1899 Harriman headed a scientific expedition to Alaska and conceived a plan to link the United States and Europe by railroad via Alaska and Siberia. Before his death in 1909, Harriman invited J. P. Morgan to visit him at "Arden," his place in Orange County, and they were reconciled there. Harriman organized the Tompkins Square Boys Club on the East Side in 1876 and at his death left the 20,000 acres, now Harriman Park, to the state.

Hill had built up the Great Northern; Morgan and his associates controlled the Northern Pacific; and Harriman and Jacob Schiff, of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., controlled the Union Pacific. All these roads wanted terminal facilities in Chicago, where the New York Central had acquired the Lake Shore. Morgan was planning to get control of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy road for the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern.

This was the situation that led up to E. H. Harriman's daring attempt to wrest control of the Northern Pacific from Morgan. Through Kuhn, Loeb & Co. Harriman got control of a majority of the preferred, but not of the common, stock before Morgan, who was in Europe, became aware of the maneuver. Using the cable freely, Morgan then began buying. During the celebrated "Northern Pacific corner" of 1901, the price of common was run up to \$1,000 a share. Both sides later agreed to settle with shorts at \$150 a share.

Having frustrated Harriman's attempt to seize the Northern Pacific, Morgan organized the Northern Securities Company as a protection against further raids of the kind. Harriman was left out, and the United States government brought suit under the Sherman Anti-Trust Law. This law and the Interstate Commerce Commission created in 1887 were beginning to run counter to each other. The laudable efforts of Theodore Roosevelt to break up monopolies were not applicable to the railroad business and utilities generally, since these were monopolistic in their very nature. The Supreme Court, by a close decision in 1904, upheld the contentions of the government in the Northern Securities case but made it clear that it was not condemning all mergers. There were many other railroad mergers, lawsuits, fights, and scandals, notably that of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford. But largely as a result of Morgan's efforts and those of the Interstate Commerce Commission the larger railroad systems were unified and became more efficient and profitable.

In general, the development of American industry from the Civil War to 1914 followed the pattern of the railroads. Morgan's greatest success in the industrial field was the organization of the United States Steel Corporation in 1901; his only conspicuous failure was the merger of the shipping interests in the International Mercantile Marine Company in 1902. The British kept the Cunard out of this combine, and the German lines remained aloof. The sinking of the Titanic, in the construction of which Morgan had taken a keen personal interest, and other adverse factors prevented the ship combine from paying off until the First World War.

United States Steel was another story. Elbert H. Gary is credited with conceiving the steel merger. He had been a judge in Illinois and was a leading Chicago lawyer and counsel of the Illinois Steel Company in 1898. When he was consulted by his clients, who wanted to buy a short railroad line from its plant in Joliet to Chicago, Gary advised that what the company required was

not so much a railroad as "a rounded proposition," embracing adequate iron ore deposits and coke ovens and better and more diversified products. This is said to have been the first blueprint of integrated steel operations as later developed. Judge Gary and J. P. Morgan also envisaged an expanding foreign market for American iron and steel.

Brooks Adams in *America's Economic Supremacy* (republished by Harper & Brothers in 1947) cites both the phenomenal rise in American iron production and the Spanish War as determining factors in the momentous shifts in world equilibrium which took place around 1900. The United States produced 3,840,000 tons of pig iron in 1880; by 1898 this had increased to 11,962,317 tons, approximately equaling the combined output of England and France, and the United States had begun to undersell the English in London.

In the view of Brooks Adams, writing in 1900, this marked the beginning of the decline of Great Britain and the shifting of the center of power from Europe to New York. Abram S. Hewitt, who became a close adviser to Judge Gary and J. P. Morgan in United States Steel, had long foreseen this development and helped bring it about. As the greatest of American ironmasters of an earlier period, Hewitt, with Peter Cooper, had made decisions and conducted experiments that were vital in this development. If Brooks Adams's prophesies and conclusions were sound, the economic revolution that brought about the most momentous world changes in centuries was led by a handful of New Yorkers operating in Wall Street.

Organizing the United States Steel Company provided something of a grand climax to the mergers that were engineered by Morgan and others during the period. Andrew Carnegie, who was getting ready to retire and devote himself to philanthropy, wanted to sell his merged companies at the highest possible price. After his break with Henry Clay Frick, Carnegie had made Charles M. Schwab president of his company. Morgan did not like Carnegie, but he got along well with Schwab and the deal was made through him. Carnegie received a total of \$217,720,000 for his holdings, paid in 5 per cent bonds of the new combine, and some forty Carnegie partners became millionaires. United States Steel was capitalized at \$1,618,000,000, with bonds of \$301,000,000, making it the first billion-dollar corporation. The twenty-four original directors included practically all the prominent bankers and industrialists in the country, with the exception of Harriman.

At a time when the United States government required several months to sell \$200,000,000 in bonds, Morgan's credit enabled him to sell a similar amount of Steel bonds as soon as they were offered. Steel common promptly advanced from 38 to 55 and the 7 per cent preferred from 82 to 101. Morgan made Judge Elbert H. Gary head of the new combine, and Gary inaugurated a policy of frank publicity, giving quarterly statistics on the business. In 1909 two-thirds of the

stock was in the hands of speculators; by 1913 this had been reduced to one-half, and later over 80 per cent was held as permanent investments.

The steel merger brought most of the large corporations and financial interests together, including those of John D. Rockefeller. In 1907 the Standard Oil Company was fined \$29,000,000 by Federal Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. This decision was set aside, but the company was ordered dissolved by the Supreme Court in 1911. It then split into several companies, which continued to grow at an increasing rate. Suit was also brought to dissolve the United States Steel combine, but the decision of the Supreme Court handed down in 1919 made a distinction between good and bad trusts and Big Steel, "a good trust," escaped dissolution.

Meantime, however, Congressman Lindbergh, of Wisconsin, introduced a resolution for a Congressional investigation into the concentration of control of money and credit. The Pujo Committee revealed that Morgan partners held 341 directorships in 112 corporations with a total capitalization of \$22,245,000,000. At these hearings J. Pierpont Morgan made one of his rare public appearances, and his declaration that character was the basis of credit made a strong impression.

J. Pierpont Morgan organized and reorganized American industry and business, but it was in the larger field of government finance and international finance and trade that the House of Morgan attained primacy. Wall Street's relation to international banking and to government finance is discussed in the following chapter. In all these developments J. Pierpont Morgan the elder had an important role. He died on March 27, 1913, and was succeeded by his son, "Jack." In a little over a year, the First World War broke out and the House of Morgan became increasingly important in many fields.

J. P. Morgan the younger died in 1943, and Thomas W. Lamont succeeded to the chairmanship of J. P. Morgan & Co., which, meanwhile, had been incorporated as a state bank, had offered stock to the public, and had become a member of the Federal Reserve System. Under the Banking Act as revised after the panic of 1933, the underwriting of securities and private deposit banking could not be combined. J. P. Morgan & Co., therefore gave up securities underwriting, but Henry Morgan and two other partners resigned and formed Morgan, Stanley & Co., for the purpose of handling investments under the new laws governing such transactions. The House of Morgan had over \$600,000,000 in deposits at the time, and it remains the largest private bank in the world.

No. 23 Wall Street is a dignified midget of a building as compared with its surroundings. Inside it is decidedly oldworldish in atmosphere. A private detective may be at or near the front door and uniformed attendants inside, but during banking hours the Morgan partners sit at desks on one side and transact a great deal of business in plain view. Of course there are private offices upstairs,

but they are not the kind of bankers' lairs depicted in the movies; they resemble comfortable libraries in old-fashioned homes. Except for desks there is little in them to suggest offices; real fireplaces and bookcases stand against the paneled walls. The furnishings are doubtless expensive, but they are not museum pieces. A. T. Stewart once called on the elder J. P. Morgan for the purpose of borrowing \$1,000,000. When he entered the office he noticed the handsome rug on the floor and asked Morgan if he had purchased it at the Stewart store. When Morgan said "no," Stewart left in a huff, declaring that if Morgan would not buy rugs from him he would go elsewhere to borrow the million.⁴

Even the bomb explosion of September, 1920, which left scars on the granite walls at "The Corner" and broke some windows, did not seriously disturb the House of Morgan. But large sums have been spent in an effort to find out who was responsible for the tragedy that befell those in the street. In the old days the big men in Wall Street lunched at Delmonico's and other famous eating places in the vicinity, but the present Morgan bank is fully equipped with kitchens and private dining rooms as well as a small general dining room. The Chase, National City, and other banks have larger dining rooms where officers and some of the staffs may lunch without bothering about the bills. There are some exclusive clubs, such as the Downtown Association and the Bankers' and Lawyers' clubs, but the number of persons directly associated with finance and securities is not large and lunch is the only meal eaten in the district by most of those employed there.

J. P. Morgan the elder left a fortune of \$68,384,680; his son left \$4,642,791, net. A long list of able men have been partners in the famous old firm, and being invited to membership in it is like being tapped by an exclusive fraternity. Henry P. Davison was a school teacher; Thomas S. Gates left the firm to become president of the University of Pennsylvania; Thomas W. Lamont, who died in 1948, was a newspaper reporter; and Russell C. Leffingwell was an assistant secretary of the Treasury and managed the financing of the First World War.

Dwight Morrow, another member of the firm, was working for the Hosletter Coke Company in Pittsburgh in 1890 and studying at night to enter West Point. In the examination Morrow stood first, but the second man, Francis Sinitier, who had political influence, got the appointment. Morrow was so indignant over this injustice that he wrote a strong letter to President Harrison, which was never acknowledged. Years later, when Morrow, Adolph Ochs, publisher of the *New York Times*, and Charles Lindbergh visited West Point together, it was remarked that all three had tried to enter the Military Academy and failed. Morrow later became a corporation lawyer, a Morgan partner, Ambassador to Mexico in the administration of his friend Coolidge, United States Senator from New Jersey, and the father-in-law of Charles Lindbergh.

⁴ *Ibid.*

"In the varied and rapid expansion of his career, he developed a new type of civilized mind." When Russell C. Leffingwell was asked just what Morrow did at Morgan's, he answered: "His job was to think."⁵

The roster of Wall Street is a long one, and contains the names of many men who are forgotten, or are not now linked with finance and banking. Moses Taylor was most interested in coal and railroads; George F. Baker, of the City Bank, was a Morgan ally; William C. Whitney was a Tammany traction magnate, as was Thomas Fortune Ryan. Richard Whitney, who headed the Stock Exchange and later went to jail, was a brother of George Whitney of the Morgan firm. Henry Havemeyer was the Sugar Trust man. Over many years, Henry Clews, Isaac H. Seligman, R. Fulton Cutting, Felix Warburg, Otto Kahn, and Otto T. Barnard—along with Jacob Schiff, of Kuhn, Loeb & Co.—were leaders in civic as well as financial matters.

In recent years, leadership in Wall Street has gravitated toward Winthrop Aldrich, head of the Chase National Bank. The Rockefellers withdrew from the Bankers Trust and merged the Chase Bank and the Equitable Trust in 1930. Winthrop W. Aldrich is the son of Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island, who was leader of the movement, started after the panic of 1907, which finally ushered in the Federal Reserve System. Aldrich is also the brother-in-law of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and was his attorney until he became head of the Equitable Trust Company on the death of Chellis Austin in 1929. With the merging of the Chase Bank and the Equitable Trust, Mr. Aldrich became head of the largest commercial bank in the world, replacing Albert H. Wiggins, one of the former leaders of Wall Street who was toppled over by the collapse of the old system. Winthrop Aldrich, by his early advocacy of reforms during the critical period following the panic of 1933 and because of his strong position, has become New York's outstanding banker. He was elected president of the New York Clearing House Association in 1947. The National City Bank is the second largest in the city.

Probably the most noted "Wall Street" name today is that of Bernard M. Baruch, who early made a fortune in the stock market, headed the War Industries Board during the First World War, and was the elder statesman called upon to work out and proclaim the United States government's atom bomb policy.

⁵ Harold Nicholson, *Dwight Morrow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935).

Chapter Twenty



Gold, Government, and International Finance

WALL STREET'S first big job was selling bonds to finance the newly established government of the United States; its latest task is selling securities of the World Bank of the United Nations, to be used in rehabilitating a war-torn civilization. The term "international bankers," as it was commonly used over a long period, suggested cynical money makers so lacking in patriotism that they would foment wars to serve their own selfish interests. Today every American taxpayer is involved in international finance, and the government is working with Wall Street in selling bonds.

International banking has always been directly related to our government finance. Once the Federal government had been firmly established, foreigners found its securities good investments. Subsequent foreign investments in state bonds and private enterprises were not always so fortunate. When exports were insufficient and foreign creditors demanded gold, our American economy and Federal finances were seriously affected. Without a unified banking system and Federal controls over finance, we could not meet recurring crises so readily as Britain, with the Bank of England as her financial anchor. Over a long period we had no international banking houses comparable to Baring Brothers in England or to the Rothschilds. By comparison, American financiers were amateurs without adequate experience or resources.

The continuing close relationship between Wall Street and the Federal government was demonstrated when the Treasury had to finance the Civil War. In 1861 United States 6 per cent bonds were down to 83-¾ and the government had to issue new bonds at 7.30 per cent. By 1863 even the new national banks were unable to cope with the flood of paper money. The crises that followed showed Wall Street at its worst and at its best. The troubles were over gold. Although many obligations were payable in gold, there was no control over the limited supply. So long as there was a premium on gold, it led to wild specula-

tion. The Gold Exchange had far more to do with early panics than the Stock Exchange. "The Gold Room" was a private institution started in a basement at 23 William Street and run by a man named Gallagher. It was closed on June 17, 1864, and premiums on gold practically ceased after 1877. Meantime the attempted corner in gold, in 1869, revealed the greatest weakness in the Wall Street system or lack of system.¹

The panic of 1869, with its memorable "Black Friday," resulted from a daring plot by Jay Gould to build up his Erie Railroad by manipulating the gold market. Gould persuaded President Grant that it would help the farmers if the government would stop selling gold. The argument was that a gold shortage would stimulate the export of grain and bring more gold into the country. In August, when President Grant ordered the Secretary of the Treasury to stop selling gold, it was at 132. It quickly rose to 140. Gould planned to get out when gold reached 145—after he had secured contracts for the Erie to transport the increased grain crops expected.

At this point Jim Fisk, Gould's henchman, went into action on his own, without knowing that Gould intended to get out from under when gold reached 145. Actually Gould unloaded his gold on September 23 at 144, but Fisk kept on—determined, it was said, to run the price up to 200, when the shorts would have to settle with him at his price. Gold reached 162 at noon on Black Friday, when the government announced that it would resume selling. Jay Gould made a huge profit, but Fisk and hundreds of speculators went down in the worst crash of its kind in the history of Wall Street. James Brown, of Brown Brothers, was the leader of a banking pool that broke this corner and helped restore order.

The government itself brought on the next crisis over gold. In 1878 Congress passed the Bland Silver Act, authorizing the Treasury to spend up to \$4,000,000 a month in buying silver to be coined into dollars. The Treasury could also re-issue legal tender notes received in exchange for gold shipped abroad to pay foreign debt balances and in this way exhaust the government's gold supply. Additional purchases of silver as a basis for Treasury Certificates, under the Sherman Act of 1890, brought on a crisis shortly after Grover Cleveland was inaugurated in 1893. United States gold stocks had been reduced by \$133,156,991 through the export of gold to meet contracts. Silver had practically lost its value. President Cleveland called a special session of Congress in August, and with the aid of Republican votes the Sherman Act was repealed.

The effects of this panic were prolonged and far-reaching and caused great distress. Baring Brothers, in England, failed in 1890. The situation was still critical in 1894, when the government had to borrow more money to protect its

¹ Young J. P. Morgan and E. B. Ketcham, the son of Morris Ketcham, bought \$2,000,000 in gold and sent it to Peabody & Co. in England, in 1861, then resold when the price went up. Morgan's profit was \$160,000. See John K. Winkler, *Morgan the Magnificent* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930).

gold reserves. An issue of \$50,000,000 was handled by a Morgan syndicate, which got most of the gold from abroad. The government's financial condition continued to deteriorate rapidly as gold moved to Europe. American securities abroad were being dumped in our market and had to be paid for in gold, and the government was approaching the stage where it could not meet its own gold obligations.

On January 28, 1895, President Cleveland sent a special message to Congress asking it to make good the government's gold obligations and prevent the re-issue of Treasury notes. Cleveland also sent William Edmond Curtis, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, to New York to confer with August Belmont, a Democratic banker, on the proposed issue of \$100,000,000 to be sold by popular subscription. Mr. Belmont advised that the only way to get the necessary money promptly was through a banking syndicate.

At this point J. P. Morgan, a Republican, was called upon. Plans were made for a Morgan-Belmont syndicate to handle an issue of \$40,000,000, with an option on another \$50,000,000 at 3-¾ per cent. After the plan had been worked out and presumably was satisfactory, word came from Washington that the deal was off. The reason given was that the rates were too high. Actually President Cleveland had balked at taking action which he felt was the responsibility of Congress. Meantime conditions were becoming more critical hourly and the bankers knew that if news leaked out that the negotiations had broken down the results would be calamitous.

Under these circumstances, J. P. Morgan made his famous trip to Washington to "save the country." Overnight, Attorney General Olney persuaded the President to see Mr. Morgan and Mr. Belmont. At the White House there was a long dramatic session during which Mr. Morgan sat silent, crumbling an unlit cigar. From time to time clerks brought in bulletins showing that heavy drafts were being made on the gold in the Sub-Treasury in Wall Street. Finally word came that only \$9,000,000 in gold coin remained in the Sub-Treasury. Mr. Morgan knew of one draft for some \$10,000,000 which might be presented. "If that \$10,000,000 draft is presented you can't meet it," he said. "It will be all over by 3 o'clock."

At this point the President asked Mr. Morgan what suggestion, if any, he cared to make. Mr. Morgan said he thought he knew a way out. He recalled that President Lincoln had been faced by a similar problem during the Civil War and that Congress had authorized the Treasury to buy gold and pay for it in bonds. A hurried search revealed that the law was still in force.

Under the arrangement finally agreed upon, the government bought gold valued at \$65,116,244.62 with bonds totaling \$62,315,400. The syndicate included J. P. Morgan & Co. and August Belmont & Co., in New York, and

J. S. Morgan & Co. and N. M. Rothschild & Sons in London. The offering in London was oversubscribed ten times; in New York the subscriptions totaled \$450,000,000 in 22 minutes. This transaction at the time was much criticized as one in which the bankers had taken advantage of the government to make huge profits. Mr. Satterlee says Mr. Morgan made no profit at all.² An important aspect of the transaction was the fact that a syndicate of international bankers, after producing the gold, was able to prevent it from being re-exported. This was accomplished through the bankers abroad meeting the demands for gold without calling on the United States.

That the government, under the laws then existing, could not even control its own finances where foreign exchange was involved is evident. In 1904, when the United States bought the Panama Canal from the French government, J. P. Morgan & Co. acted as fiscal agent for the government and paid the Banque de France \$40,000,000. The initial shipment, on April 29, 1904, for \$3,500,000, was the first gold shipment made by that firm in eighteen years, and it was the largest shipment of gold ever made by a New York firm up to that time.

Wall Street's aid to government has not been limited to gold transactions. In 1877, during the Tilden-Hayes contest and the critical controversy over the use of troops in the South, Congress failed to adopt an Army appropriations bill, thus leaving troops that had been used in the South and West without pay for months. To meet this distressing situation, Drexel, Morgan & Co. voluntarily advanced the money, relying on Congress to make repayment, which it did. And during the panic of 1907 New York City could not borrow to pay its employees until Mayor McClellan and Comptroller Herman A. Metz, at a conference in J. P. Morgan's library, had arranged for a \$30,000,000 loan.

A much more serious situation confronted the city when war broke out in 1914. New York had issued over \$80,000,000 in short-term notes payable in monthly installments in London and Paris. It was impossible to sell bonds or to convert dollars into sterling and francs at the existing fantastic rate of exchange. Comptroller Prendergast appealed to J. P. Morgan for help. After getting the approval of Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo to release the gold, 126 New York banks were brought into a \$100,000,000 pool under Morgan leadership, and the city met its foreign obligations. Dwight Morrow signed the agreement for the bankers at the City Club at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. As it turned out, the operation showed a profit of over \$2,000,000, which was shared between the city and the banks. J. P. Morgan & Co. received \$11,121, and the banks refused to accept their customary commissions. "I am certain," wrote Comptroller Prendergast, "that the people of the city will, as they should, appreciate the fine

² Herbert L. Satterlee, *J. Pierpont Morgan* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939).

spirit of civic interest in which these gentlemen have undertaken their tremendous task.”³

Wall Street again came to the City's rescue in 1933, when the scandals of the Walker regime, combined with the bank panic and the depression, so impaired the city's credit that it could not borrow to pay schoolteachers and other employees. Under the Bankers' Agreement entered into at that time the city administration virtually surrendered its power over expenditures, and it took several years under LaGuardia to restore it.

The crash of 1907 was a “bankers' panic.” Charles W. Morse had invented “chain banking,” using the stock of one enterprise as collateral to buy another. He put funds of the Knickerbocker Trust Company and of the Mercantile National Bank into such schemes. The Knickerbocker failed, and its president, Charles T. Barney, shot himself; the National Bank of America went down, and runs started on the Trust Company of America and the Lincoln Trust. The Mercantile National appealed for help.

October 24, 1907, was a day of terror in Wall Street. All sales stopped; interest rates stood at 150 per cent, but there was no money to be had. Theodore Roosevelt sent Secretary Cortelyou to New York to see what could be done.⁴ Cortelyou said he could deal only through the national banks, and only if they were united. At this stage J. Pierpont Morgan took over. First he formed a pool that lent \$40,000,000 at 10 per cent, under rigid controls, to help Stock Exchange members.

A dramatic situation occurred during this panic, when Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, Cortelyou, sat in the Sub-Treasury ordering deposits of millions, while George W. Perkins rushed back and forth between the Sub-Treasury and the “malefactor of great wealth,” J. P. Morgan, and worked feverishly to get enough money together to stop the runs on the banks. As a part of this drama, Tennessee Coal and Iron, a steel competitor, was taken into the combine with T.R.'s approval. This “deal” grew out of the threatened failure of the firm of Moore & Schley, that was heavily involved in Tennessee Coal and Iron stocks. After a strenuous session in his library, Morgan agreed to handle the matter if the larger trust companies would put up \$25,000,000 to help the weak institutions. Nine banks had closed by the end of the first week, and runs continued until Morgan got the trust companies together. By 1910 Morgan con-

³ Harold Nicholson, *Dwight Morrow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935).

⁴ George Bruce Cortelyou, who was born in New York and served as a stenographer to Grover Cleveland, became an assistant clerk to McKinley in 1898. He became presidential secretary, and Theodore Roosevelt appointed him Secretary of the new Department of Commerce and Labor in 1903. After serving as chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1904 and as Postmaster General the next year, he had become Secretary of the Treasury in 1907. Later he was president of the Consolidated Edison Company of New York.

trolled the Guaranty Trust Company, which absorbed the Morton and Fifth Avenue Trust Companies and dominated this field.

Although the panic of 1907 was a "bankers' panic" growing out of domestic conditions, there was one development which showed the close relation between international trade and domestic economy. On October 31, "foreign exchange suddenly rose from a gold import to a gold export point." To restore the situation it was necessary to move grain and cotton to tidewater so that foreign bills of lading could be issued against shipments. There was a law prohibiting railroads from discriminating in favor of one commodity in moving freight. When Secretary Cortelyou explained the situation to Theodore Roosevelt, the President advised the railroads to rush the grain and cotton to the ships regardless.⁵

The United States finally adopted the gold standard in 1900 after a quarter of a century of frenzied finance. When the First World War broke out, the role of Wall Street in international finance was completely reversed. Instead of selling American securities abroad, our international bankers began buying back American securities and selling foreign bonds to Americans. J. P. Morgan & Co. became the American agent of the Allied governments. The first big flotation of foreign securities was the \$500,000,000 Anglo-French 5 per cent loan of 1915; the biggest single listing was the British 5 per cent war loan of \$10,000,000,000. When the United States entered the war in 1917, this government took over the financing of the associated governments.

Since that time we have had a "managed currency," but the activities of the private financial community of New York were not diminished. Organized efforts were made by private bankers, supporting the Dawes and Young plans, to deal with the war debts and to put Europe back on her feet. Millions were lost by American investors, but the causes of these losses were political rather than financial. There were other tremendous losses from other foreign bonds sold here during the boom in the twenties.

Although we had attained greater stability through the creation of the Federal Reserve Banking System, there were still no controls over the issuance of securities and other financial operations, including international exchange. At the same time governmental policies respecting war debts, tariffs, and the chaotic conditions in Europe eventually led to world-wide economic collapse. These policies were not made in Wall Street, although their cumulative effects were finally registered there.

In a sense the crash in 1929 was another gold crisis, but with a difference. We had become a creditor nation, but instead of receiving goods from other nations, as those nations had previously taken our goods in payment of their loans to us, we began importing gold. In addition, foreign gold was poured into Wall Street for speculative purposes. This drain on Europe's gold had the inevitable effect

⁵ Herbert L. Satterlee, *op cit.*

of driving Britain and other nations off the gold standard. We held on until the bank panic of 1933 closed the banks.

The Wall Street crash of 1929 and the bank panic of 1933 were international in scope and it was beyond the power of any group of banks to avert these catastrophies. October 24, 1929, was the fatal day in Wall Street. Stocks had been falling steadily for some days. Shortly after the opening of the Exchange some big blocks of stock were put up and prices began to sag. Before noon the deluge of selling began. From then on, the market that seemed to have no top found it had no bottom.

Once more the bankers hurried to The Corner, and six banks formed a pool of \$240,000,000, with another \$100,000,000 offered. Thomas W. Lamont, always unperturbed, told reporters that "it seems there has been some disturbed selling in the market," but a little later he calmly told the governors of the Stock Exchange: "Gentlemen, there is no man or group of men who can buy all the stocks that the American public can sell."⁶

On December 31, 1929, two months after the Wall Street crash, bank deposits stood at \$55,000,000,000. By March 3, 1933, this total had been deflated by \$16,000,000,000. Over 8,000 banks failed between January 1, 1931, and September 30, 1932, when a new epidemic started. Yet most of the banks in New York were in good shape. The local situation was not critical. The runs on New York banks came in the form of letters, telegrams, and telephone calls from all over the country. Locally the savings banks were the first to notice the growing panic. These are the strongest banks in the United States and they pool their resources in emergencies, but they could not convert their mortgages, bonds, and other securities into cash overnight. Even if this could have been done it would not have ended the panic.

At the time of the bank holiday in 1933, bank deposits totaled \$40,000,000,000, the total currency in use was between five and six billion, and there was a gold reserve of four or five billion. Ordinarily 90 per cent of American business is done by the use of checks, but when the panic started people began to hoard currency. Not only did they want to turn checks and securities and property into currency, but they even wanted to turn their currency into gold—and there was not enough gold.

After Great Britain had left the gold standard and taken half the world with her, we could not compete with the depreciated foreign currencies, and this put a premium on gold which was primarily of benefit to speculators. That was the situation facing the country when Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1933. He promptly issued a proclamation, took over the entire banking and monetary system of the country, including foreign exchange, and took the

⁶ H. W. Baldwin and S. Stone, *We Saw It Happen* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939).

United States off the gold standard. There was consternation in some quarters, but J. P. Morgan (the younger), who knew what the situation called for, publicly expressed his approval of what the President had done, including the placing of an embargo on gold.

President Roosevelt's action in taking the United States off the gold standard represented a fundamental change of world-wide importance. Other changes were equally significant in relation to our national economy. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the United States was better prepared financially than it had ever been to meet such a crisis. Our monetary system was not disrupted by a gold crisis or by the dumping of stocks. With control over banks exercised by the Federal Reserve System, we moved steadily through the periods of national emergency and active military preparations and into the financing of the war, including lend-lease and other forms of aid to our allies, as well as the enormous expansion of our plants to meet the demands of war.

The supreme test of Wall Street's contribution came during that global war. It was not merely a monetary contribution, although government finance was greatly facilitated by the mobilization of the machinery and resources of the Street. A more accurate measure was the degree to which American industry was enabled to outproduce the world as a result of its special organization and efficiency. Syndicate banking methods, which made it possible to aid governments in crises and to create larger and more efficient industrial units, also had the effect of unifying the community and the country and of permitting the collective resources of the nation to be used effectively in its development.

It is much easier to elaborate the details than to simplify the infinitely complex story of Wall Street. We live under a highly artificial financial and economic system as intricate as it is stupendous. To those who have felt the impact of some of the crises in recent years, describing Wall Street's simple beginnings is like seeing a movie thriller run backwards. Wall Street is the outstanding product of New York's special genius for mastering multiplicity—giving it order, unity, and direction. It represents something more than growth or discipline. In essence it is a process, or formula, tested through the years, which has found general acceptance and application. The sequences in this process, which are to be noted in almost every field of endeavor, show that its initiation was followed by uncontrolled proliferation or expansion; the next stage was organization and the gradual establishment of a degree of control; after which came further expansion and controls and integration with the larger scheme of things.

Wall Street today faces a new and bigger task, and the world is coming to look toward the Street with new eyes. Following the First World War, a Bank of International Settlements was set up in Geneva, and a beginning was made in providing machinery, under the control of the co-operating countries, to facilitate international financial transactions. Something was accomplished, but

the abortive League of Nations—which represented an attempt to organize the world politically before it was organized economically—was more of a hindrance than a help.

When the United Nations organization was formed, it was recognized that economic and financial stability were essential in order to organize for peace. An early effort toward achieving that stability was made at Dumbarton Oaks and at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, where forty-four nations framed the constitution of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund. Later, at Savannah in 1946, the World Bank took definite form.

Nothing was further from the minds of the men who met at Dumbarton Oaks and at Bretton Woods than the idea that they were creating another "Wall Street bank." The institution they conceived was to be a great joint enterprise by the nations, free from the kind of influences and practices associated with Wall Street. But obvious difficulties arose, and there were controversies as those responsible for setting up the bank got down to realistic consideration of the problems. There was a deadlock for several months as the organizers argued. The bank could not get started, and the hopes of those who were counting on the new international bank to help get the world back on its feet seemed doomed. The real fight was between Washington and Wall Street points of view over controls and policies. In the end the realists won.

The issue as it came before the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations was whether the World Bank and Monetary Fund were to be specialized agencies of the United Nations or directly under its control. The vote was thirteen to three in favor of making them special agencies, which means that they are to be operated on established banking principles, free from political pressures. Russia remained out of the World Bank and does not participate in the fund.

John J. McCloy, a New York lawyer, became president; Robert L. Garner, formerly of the Guaranty Trust Company, vice-president; and Eugene E. Black, of the Chase National Bank, became United States director. Almost immediately the World Bank achieved status as a going concern. Early in June, 1947, France got a \$250,000,000 loan, and other applications were being processed. By mid-July the World Bank offered its first bonds for sale in Wall Street. The \$250,000,000 issue was quickly sold. On August 3, the *Herald-Tribune* reported that commercial banks in New York were complaining that they "were able to purchase only a fraction of the number of bonds they desired."

President McCloy had gone to Albany and conferred with Governor Dewey on insurance company investments. Originally the New York insurance companies were to limit their purchases of World Bank bonds to the total United States government subscription. This ruling was later changed, since it suggested

limited confidence in the World Bank. The New York insurance companies may now invest up to 5 per cent of their assets. In 1945 the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company had only 5.2 per cent of its total assets in industrial bonds other than railroads and utilities.

An official brochure of the World Bank describes its operations as follows:

Years ago, capital from abroad aided immeasurably in building the United States—its railroads in their infancy, its young industries. Today [1947] the United States, co-operating with 43 other nations through the International Bank, has before it the opportunity to advance long-term capital to help reconstruct and develop member nations and to benefit the United States in so doing. * * * It is a plain economic fact that prosperity in other countries is essential to the prosperity of the United States—if not actually today, then certainly tomorrow—and that such prosperity promotes economic co-operation which, by its nature, breeds peace, not war. Private capital, applied to productive ends through the International Bank, and surrounded by its protections, can build the bridge to a prosperous world.

The brochure continues:

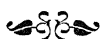
The Bank will sell debentures, first to the United States and later to some of the other member countries. The sale of these debentures will provide the principal source of loanable funds for the Bank. Thus the Bank will be both a borrower and a lender—borrowing money from investment sources such as insurance companies, commercial banks, savings banks, trusts, estates, and individuals.

Only slight changes in wording are necessary to translate this prospectus of the World Bank into a condensed history of Wall Street. The total authorized capital of the World Bank is \$10,000,000,000, but it is not going to lend the major part of its capital, which is to be provided by the member nations. It is going to borrow from investors and lend for purposes approved by the member countries. This is another step in the evolution of what is called capitalism. Is there a more practical way to get the world back on its feet? There can be no better investments than in peace bonds, and the World Bank, like our own government in 1789, is selling bonds in Wall Street.

Part Five: » PUTTING

GREATER NEW YORK TOGETHER

Chapter Twenty-one



Widening the Continental Gateway

EFFORTS have been made to unify the Port of New York ever since 1664, when the Duke of York gave New Jersey to his friends Berkeley and Carteret. Governor Nicolls protested at the time that the harbor unified the area and should be under one administration. Smuggling was facilitated by the division, and Indians left New York because they could trade more freely across the river.

The British improved the New York waterfront, but for some time after the Revolution the city lacked the resources, and Federal and state aid were not made available, to provide adequate facilities. Beginnings were made in establishing bulkhead lines and in planning marginal ways and wharves, but it was 1851 before the Federal government started deepening Hell Gate. This work and that on the East River channel were not completed until 1911.¹

Meantime old conflicts over the question of jurisdiction continued between New York and New Jersey. These were intensified when New York gave Livingston and Fulton a monopoly to operate steamships on the Hudson. Thomas Gibbons, a Southerner who had a summer home in Elizabeth, New Jersey, challenged the New York monopoly by putting two steamships into operation in the harbor. One of these was the "Bellona," of which Cornelius Van der Bilt, who made a success of his Staten Island ferry, was the captain.²

The New York authorities tried to stop this service but feared that if they seized the "Bellona" New Jersey would retaliate by attacking one of the Hudson River monopoly ships when it was on the other side of the harbor. It took two months to catch Captain Vanderbilt (as his name came to be written), who hid behind a panel in the "Bellona" cabin while the vessel was in New York,

¹ Thomas E. Rush, *The Port of New York* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1920).

² Writer's Program of the Works Projects Administration, *Maritime History of New York* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1941).

but he was finally arrested one Sunday on the Battery. Vanderbilt proved that on this day he was working for D. D. Tompkins, who held a monopoly license. Later Gibbons got a law passed under which any New York officer who arrested a New Jersey citizen for monopoly violations could be arrested if found in New Jersey. Vanderbilt himself once kidnapped a New York deputy and threatened to take him to New Jersey.

The issue was joined when New Jersey entered suit and asserted her right to regulate steam navigation on the west side of the Hudson. Gibbons and Aaron Ogden, who then headed the Fulton-Livingston monopoly, were parties to the famous case, which reached the Supreme Court in 1824, with Daniel Webster and Attorney General William Wirt representing Gibbons. Chief Justice John Marshall's decision ruling against navigation monopolies in foreign or interstate commerce was later said by Albert Beveridge, in his biography of Marshall, "to have made the United States."³ Cornelius Vanderbilt later secured control of the "Bellona" and operated her, and Mrs. Vanderbilt ran the Bellona Tavern at the New Brunswick terminal.

Following the Civil War and the virtual disappearance of American ships on the main trade routes of the world, the New York shipping interests concentrated on developing inland transportation, coastal shipping, and trade in the Western Hemisphere where they had monopolies or special advantages. One of the most successful American pioneers in economic imperialism was William Russell Grace, whose father had risked his life and fortune supporting Venezuela's struggle for independence. With his father's help, W. R. Grace established a ship-handler's firm in Peru, and organized W. R. Grace & Company in New York in 1865. Grace became an adviser to the Peruvian government and made his master stroke in 1890, when he practically secured a mortgage on Peru by taking over the government's debt of \$250,000,000 in return for concessions that included mines, guano deposits, oil, 5,000,000 acres of land, and leases on two railways. In 1895 the Grace companies were united under a Virginia charter and opened offices in every country in Latin America. The Grace Company's activities included banking and utilities as well as exporting and importing and the operation of steamship lines.

Although he was called "the Pirate of Peru" during the campaign, W. R. Grace was elected Mayor of New York in 1880. He ran as the anti-Tammany candidate and was the city's first Catholic mayor. He made a good record as a reformer and was re-elected as an independent in 1884. Among other things he accomplished, he reduced the tax rate. The Grace Line now operates the Santa Fleet to Latin America. The United Fruit Company, a competitor, was

³ Julius Henry Cohen, *They Built Better Than They Knew* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1946).

started in 1900 and has its home offices in Boston, but many of its 94 ships sail from New York.

The International Mercantile Marine grew out of the merging contagion of the period and was related to the organization of United States Steel by J. P. Morgan, who planned to export steel. Clement A. Griscom had organized the American Line, which operated the "City of New York," the "City of Paris," and the liners "St. Paul" and "St. Louis." The American Line was taken over by the I.M.M., which now includes among its subsidiaries the United States and Panama Pacific lines. Captain Robert Dollar inaugurated his round-the-world service in 1924.

The Cunard Line, which merged with the White Star in 1934, is the oldest transatlantic steamship company operating on a regular schedule. Samuel Cunard, who had been in the business since 1813, started service between Liverpool, Halifax, and Boston in 1840. The French Line, formerly the *Compagnie Generale Maritime*, was organized in 1855 primarily to engage in fishing off Newfoundland, but it sent its first paddle-wheel steamer, the "Washington" into New York in 1864. The Italian Line represented a merger of several old companies, one of which goes back to 1840.

The fact that most of the goods in and out of New York were carried in foreign bottoms did not diminish the importance of New York, and there was a growing demand for improved facilities. The Federal government did little to encourage our merchant marine and still less for American harbors, and the city was too poor, or its administrations too indifferent, to effect improvements. Some work on the main harbor channels was started in 1834, but the first Gedney Channel contract was not let by the Federal government until 1885. Meantime, in 1870, the Legislature created a Department of Docks, and a general plan was developed. This was primarily the work of General McClellan, the Civil War hero, who was chief engineer of the Department and father of the future Mayor. At that time, piers averaged 450 by 50 feet and the total waterfront was 145 miles.

New York was fortunate in that the city still owned much of its waterfront. It derived increasing revenue from this property as the demand for facilities grew, but the deepening of the harbor channels and other improvements were long delayed. John Wolfe Ambrose probably did more than any other individual to secure the harbor betterments which New York required to meet the steadily growing business. Ambrose was born in Newcastle, near Limerick, Ireland, on January 10, 1838, and was brought to New York as a child. He went to work at an early age, studied at night, and later attended New York University and Princeton, intending to become a minister. Instead, in 1860, he went into newspaper work, and later joined the staff of the Citizens' Association, organized to promote municipal reform.

With the development of rapid transit, Ambrose engaged in construction work on the Second Avenue Elevated line and the Sixth Avenue line from 72nd to 158th streets. At one time he had 7,000 men working under him and broke all existing records in the speed with which he extended the "El" structures. Ambrose also opened numerous streets in upper Manhattan and laid the first pneumatic tubes for the Western Union Telegraph Company. Mayor Hugh J. Grant asked him to head the Street Cleaning Department; he declined, but drafted a bill for the reorganization of the department, a plan later put into effect by Colonel Waring in Mayor Strong's administration.

In 1880 Ambrose was president of the Brooklyn Wharf and Dry Dock Company and founder of the 39th Street Ferry in South Brooklyn. At that time the South Brooklyn waterfront was a swampy area, with an average depth of eight feet of water at high tide in Buttermilk Channel. Conditions were not greatly different from those in the early days when cows could cross from Governor's Island to the Brooklyn shore at low tide. The long stretch of waterfront from 28th Street to 65th Street was undeveloped. Ambrose made his first trip to Washington in 1881 to begin his long fight for deeper channels in New York Harbor. Between 1891 and 1896, New York, the country's chief port, had received only one dollar out of every \$100 spent on rivers and harbors.⁴ During the next fifteen years Congress appropriated \$1,478,000 for the Bay Ridge and Red Hook channels, making them 1,000 feet wide and 40 feet deep. And in 1891 the Sandy Hook Channel was dredged to a depth of 30 feet.

Still fighting for adequate ocean approaches, Ambrose headed a large delegation that appeared before the River and Harbor Committee of the House on December 22, 1898, and pleaded for funds. The appeal was rejected. Ambrose then went to the Senate Committee on Commerce, of which William P. Frye, of Maine, was chairman. As a result of this effort, appropriations were assured which provided for the present channel, 2,000 feet wide and 40 feet deep, from the Narrows to the ocean. A great public dinner was given in Ambrose's honor at the old Waldorf-Astoria on April 26, 1899, but he insisted on giving credit to Senator Frye for the harbor improvement. Ambrose died shortly afterwards, on May 15, 1899. The Legislature and Congress named the New York channel for Ambrose, and there is a memorial to him at the Battery, with a bust by O'Connor.

When the United States emerged from the Spanish-American War as a world power and a strong new competitor in the field of international trade, there was a heavy increase in shipping. With the consolidation of Greater New York the waterfront in the city was increased to 578 miles, and the new piers became 710 feet long and 90 feet wide. A good deal of far-sighted planning

⁴ *Valentine's Manual*, 1919-20, edited by Henry Collins Brown (New York: Valentine's Manual, Inc., 1920).

went into our empire-building activities around the turn of the century. We acquired the former Spanish possessions in the Caribbean, and Theodore Roosevelt "took" Panama and thus assured completion of the canal. We also acquired the Philippines and other stepping stones to China, where John Hay had proclaimed the Open Door policy. Our new navy's trip around the world, T.R.'s rough treatment of the Tripoli bandits, and our participation in the Algeciras Conference were all parts of the planned effort by the Federal government to further American trade.

New York became the chief beneficiary of the expanding economy represented by the increases in international trade and our national development. Private interests in New York made the most of the new opportunities during the next decade. Immigration was at full tide, Manhattan reached its peak in population in 1910, and the other boroughs were growing even faster.

The tremendous increase in shipping called for harbor improvements on a still larger scale. From 1851 to 1918, \$29,431,000 was spent by the Federal government in the Port District. New York City spent \$105,000,000 for land and piers between 1870 and 1918. Owning most of the valuable waterfront, the city built piers and leased them. The city's policy in the matter of wharf and pier rentals has varied considerably from time to time. Normally the piers are self-supporting and the city does not seek to make a profit. At one time, New York's wharfage rates were lower than those of other Atlantic ports, and it was found that they could be increased considerably without jeopardizing the volume of business. That rates could be higher was indicated in 1918, when it was shown that piers were subleased at rates as high as twenty times that paid on the original lease. In 1947 Comptroller Lazarus Joseph declared that rates were too low and were causing losses to the city.

The first major waterfront improvement undertaken after the consolidation was the construction of the Chelsea piers, extending from 12th to 23rd streets on the North River, where nine larger docks were built at a cost of \$15,000,000. The piers were started in 1902, when J. P. Morgan combined five lines into the International Mercantile Marine Company. These 1,000-foot piers could accommodate the largest ships then afloat. By 1918, piers 1,125 feet long were required. In 1918 under the Hylan regime twelve large piers were built in Staten Island, and Piers 88, 90, and 92 in Manhattan were constructed in 1938 under Mayor LaGuardia to accommodate the "Normandie," the "Queen Mary," and the "Rex."

Otherwise the city left largely to private interests and to other agencies the task of providing facilities to care for the expanding activities around the harbor. Except in Manhattan, where the city still owns a large part of the waterfront, private interests have led in promoting many outstanding developments. In this matter the railroads took the initiative in providing piers, tugs, and other

services. The New Jersey side of the harbor, where some seven railroads have terminals, is largely taken up by the competing carriers.

All freight to and from New York City and most of New England, as well as to and from ships loading on the east side of the port, must be ferried across the North River or the Bay. This is the most important single factor in the modern port's development, and it is the cause of many anomalies. Federal jurisdiction over the port has steadily increased since the days of John Marshall, Thomas Gibbons, and Vanderbilt, and the Federal Port District now extends as far as Albany and covers Connecticut as well as New York and New Jersey. Nevertheless, rivalry and disputes between New York and New Jersey continue.

As shipping activities increased, Manhattan's piers became crowded and space for warehousing, manufacturing, and related waterfront activities was scarce and costly. Since the railroads, with the exception of the New York Central and the New Haven and Hartford, had their freight terminals in New Jersey, that side of the harbor developed more rapidly than the Brooklyn side and other sections of the New York waterfront except Manhattan.

Brooklyn had numerous shipbuilding and repair yards and basins and shared some of the business brought by the Erie Canal and by the smaller ships. Docks and warehouses had also been built under Brooklyn Heights in the days of the clipper ships, when the Lows, the Mallorys, and other families connected with shipping lived on the bluff overlooking the harbor; but Brooklyn was far behind other parts of the port until after the consolidation.

Irving T. Bush was barely twenty-one when he became interested in the port which he was to serve so effectively for the rest of his life. He was a young man of means, and his property included land on the South Brooklyn waterfront. He had traveled abroad and was convinced from what he saw in other port cities that New York harbor was not meeting the needs of shipping. He built a pier on his property only to find that, despite its cheap rates, the railroads and shippers would not use it. It was too far from Manhattan and New Jersey, where shipping then centered. Bush was determined to have his pier used, and he chartered a ship called the "Independent," which he sent to Jamaica to pick up cargo.

Shippers and traders were reluctant to do business with an unknown and independent ship owner, and Bush was compelled to buy a cargo of green bananas to keep from coming home in ballast. He was unable to sell a shipload of bananas in South Brooklyn and had to rent a pier in Manhattan to unload and auction them. After he had made several trips to Jamaica he was approached by the dominant interests in the trade, and an agreement was made under which they consented to send certain non-perishable cargos to his South Brooklyn pier if he would stop interfering with their business and not charge them for the

use of his pier or for handling their goods. Bush agreed because of the interest that would be aroused when ships were seen at his pier.

The Bush Terminal grew from this small beginning. It is today the largest and most comprehensive development of its kind in the world. The terminal covers over 200 acres and has eighteen piers, 1,220 to 1,350 feet long, which can accommodate three ships on each side. Warehouses provide storage space, including refrigeration facilities, and there are vast buildings for the manufacturing and processing of goods, in addition to extensive railroad yards. The Bush company has also built large buildings in Manhattan and in London.

Such an enterprise on the Brooklyn side of the harbor at once began to attract business from the older and more congested sections of the port. With the outbreak of war in 1914 all the port facilities were soon being used to capacity. But by 1917 something like a crisis had developed, and a number of other things happened in quick succession. The submarine menace had intensified the shipping situation, making it necessary to concentrate even more shipping in New York and to speed the loading and handling of goods. In April the United States entered the war. Meanwhile New Jersey had started proceedings before the Interstate Commerce Commission to abolish free lighterage on freight from New Jersey to the east side of the harbor.

After we entered the First World War conditions in the port became chaotic. Men, munitions, and other freight flowing toward the port from all directions could not be handled. Trains were backed up as far as Pittsburgh. Although there was the greatest possible demand for space on ships, many were forced to sail half empty. All the operations of the Army, Navy, railroads, and ships were disorganized. This situation compelled the Federal government to step in and create the War Board of the Port of New York, with Irving T. Bush as chairman. Thereafter operations were co-ordinated and became more efficient than they had ever been.

Another important development at about that time was the decision to build the great Army Base next to the Bush Terminal. The Army Base, including the Bush Terminal, became the headquarters of the New York Port of Embarkation during the Second World War. Half of all the American troops that went overseas and a third of their supplies were shipped from the New York Port of Embarkation. There are more than 3,800,000 square feet of storage space and room for 450 railroad cars in this base, and more than 60,000 persons were employed there during the war. The Naval Base, also in South Brooklyn, and the Navy Yard, which now surrounds Wallabout Basin, were also expanded enormously.

With these developments, Brooklyn's waterfront became perhaps the most intensely developed area of its kind in the world. Luxury liners still steam majestically up the North River to dock within a mile or so of the heart of mid-

town Manhattan—which they cannot do in any other great port city—but with the New York Dock Company under Brooklyn Heights and numerous other piers available a large part of New York's shipping is now concentrated around Brooklyn, with Newtown and Gowanus creeks handling an astonishing percentage of the total tonnage moved by car floats, lighters, and small craft in the port.

The intensive development of the Brooklyn waterfront and the experience gained during the First World War led to the creation of the Port of New York Authority, which has since become the most important agency in unifying the port. The movement leading to the setting up of this *ad hoc* body was initiated when New Jersey started proceedings to abolish free lighterage. The Interstate Commerce Commission, by setting uniform freight rates for both sides of the harbor, recognized the essential unity of the port. Under this ruling the railroads charge the same rates on freight whether it is delivered on the New Jersey side of the port or is transported by lighters or railroad car floats to the east side of the harbor. (The New York Central is the only railroad that brings freight from the West into Manhattan directly by rail.)

Since 1917 New Jersey has sought to have the I.C.C. establish a higher rate on freight now transported by the free lighterage facilities in the harbor. This would give New Jersey obvious advantages, and it would raise the costs of all goods delivered to or shipped from New York City to the South and the West over any railroad except the New York Central.

The New York interests realized the dangers in this attempt to "split" the port and organized to meet it. The first effort to abolish free lighterage failed, but the issue has since been raised again and the threat to New York has not been permanently removed. Meantime, however, the Port of New York Authority has greatly expanded its activities. Following a survey, the agency was set up in 1922 and developed a comprehensive plan for unifying the railroads and other port facilities. The main features of this plan were a freight tunnel from Greenville, New Jersey, to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, with belt lines and connecting railroads that would facilitate the movement of freight around the harbor. Because of opposition from the railroad companies, which would not agree on joint use of the freight tunnel and other rails, this harbor plan never materialized.

In the meantime the Port of New York Authority began developing facilities for handling vehicular traffic. It took over the Holland Tunnel and later built Lincoln Tunnel. The George Washington Bridge was constructed, as were the Outerbridge Crossing and the Goethals and Bayonne bridges connecting Staten Island and New Jersey. As the Port of New York Authority continued to expand it built an Inland Freight Terminal for the handling of less than carload lots of freight. By 1947, the Port Authority was planning terminals for motor

trucks in New York and New Jersey and a union bus terminal in midtown Manhattan. At the same time the Authority signed an agreement with the city to take over and operate the municipal airports, to enlarge LaGuardia Field, and to take back Floyd Bennett Field from the Navy. A similar arrangement was made with Newark, and a plan was developed for other airports in the Metropolitan area.

The World Trade Corporation, a non-profit organization headed by Winthrop Aldrich, proposed in 1947 to take over a large part of the city's waterfront property, build new piers, and operate them. Before acting on this proposal, Mayor O'Dwyer requested the Port of New York Authority to make a survey and report with the idea that this body submit a counter proposal. This report was submitted on February 10, 1948.

At this time the city owned and operated some 190 piers, of which 123 are in Manhattan, 17 in Brooklyn, 2 in Queens, and one in The Bronx. In Richmond the city owns 14 piers, twelve of which were constructed during the Hylan regime. The first Foreign Trade Zone in the United States was established on these piers in 1937 under a grant from the Federal government. The purpose of the Free Port is to provide an area in which foreign merchandise can be received, processed, or held pending shipment to another foreign country without going through the Customs House procedure, paying duties, or posting bonds if the goods are later brought into the country. In the first four years of the Free Port's operations goods valued at over \$145,000,000 were handled. During the war its operations were transferred to four vacant North River piers, and the area on Staten Island was used by the government. The Free Port has since been re-established in Staten Island. One feature of the whole development was the transfer of the headquarters for the handling of Sumatra and Java tobacco from London to New York.

The White Star liner "Oceanic" was still Queen of the Seas in 1900, but it was outclassed by the first "Mauretania" and the "Lusitania," which lowered all previous speed records for liners in 1907. Then came the Hamburg-American "Imperator" in 1912, the German Kaiser's first determined challenge to the British. The British White Star liners "Olympic" and "Titanic" provided one answer to the German bid. Somewhat smaller than the "Imperator," they were equally luxurious. The "Titanic" on her maiden trip was sunk by an iceberg on April 14, 1912.

Two years later, the Hamburg-American line reinforced its fleet with the "Vaterland," even larger than the "Imperator." Renamed the "Leviathan," the "Vaterland" was an Allied transport during the First World War. The British answer was the "Aquitania," which arrived in New York on June 5, 1914. Smaller than her German rivals, the new ship emphasized safety and luxury. The war checked the race for some years, but the Germans constructed the

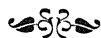
"Bremen," which came in on July 22, 1929, after breaking the record. Her sister ship, the "Europa," arrived in March, 1930. Then followed another interlude during which France and Italy made bids for a larger part of the luxury business. The "Rex" of the Italian Line was smaller than her rivals but established a speed record from Gibraltar in 1933. The "Conte di Savoia," sister ship of the "Rex" but somewhat slower, was the first liner to use gyrostabilizers.

The French superliner "Normandie" which arrived in New York on June 3, 1935, was the fastest, largest, and most luxurious ship to appear on the seas up to that time. She was destroyed by fire on February 9, 1942, turned over, had to be raised at great expense, and was finally sold for junk. The British answer to the "Normandie" was the "Queen Mary," which wrested the blue ribbon from the "Normandie" and remained the fastest liner afloat until the "Queen Elizabeth" was launched in 1939. As transports, the two Queens were important factors in winning the war. The "Elizabeth," rehabilitated as a luxury liner, returned in 1946.

The "Ile de France," the "Empress of Britain," and the "Nieuw Amsterdam" were other famous ships of the period. So were the Polish ships, the "Pilsudski" and the "Batory." Following the First World War the United States Lines operated ships taken over by this country and new ones built during and after the war, including the "Manhattan," the "Washington," the "Roosevelt," and others. The largest, fastest, and most luxurious American ship in 1947 was the "America," which, refitted, returned after service in the war.

Millions of Americans have traveled on these great ships; other millions have seen them come and go in New York harbor, where their lines and markings are as familiar as any of the famous buildings in the city. During the war they were transports taking our men to all parts of the world. Both in peace and in war these ships made history—world history. They are the great shuttles in the international loom that has been weaving the fabrics of human destiny. We can read the story of New York in the patterns spelled out by those mighty shuttles. Verily New York is a City of Ships, but the ships that serve New York also constitute a city—a great city in motion, moving back and forth over the seven seas, carrying the peoples and goods of all nations, and helping to mold them into a more compact and more peaceful and prosperous community.

Chapter Twenty-two



Railroads and the City Pattern

RAILROADS were the most potent factors in shaping New York as we know it. The city could not exist without the best transportation in the world, yet this does not constitute a comprehensive, integrated system, and people and business have to adjust themselves to it.

No railroad connects more than two of the five boroughs, scattered over several islands. New Yorkers may use trains between Manhattan and The Bronx, between Manhattan and Queens, and between Queens and Brooklyn. Otherwise they depend on other forms of transportation. They must journey to Manhattan to take trains to New England, the West, or the South, and most of the freight is moved around the harbor by tugs pushing floats and lighters.

This is a costly arrangement, but it has a definite aesthetic advantage—especially for Manhattan, the only center of comparable size that is not cluttered with unsightly railroads and train yards. With the removal of the Third Avenue elevated, virtually all of Manhattan's rail facilities will be underground or out of sight. Getting them underground was a remarkable achievement, and it took a long time and huge sums of money.

Before the days of air raids and blitzkriegs—to say nothing of atom bombs—the most disruptive force to invade the older centers of civilization was the Iron Horse. Previous changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution were gradual. In a relatively short time the Iron Horse ploughed its way across and up and down the continent, piercing mountains, leaping streams, cutting great gashes in hillsides, and piling up footings in lowlands and along the banks of streams.

The iron monster created something like havoc when it thundered into old communities, belching sparks and black smoke, its clanking bells and shrill whistles warning everyone and everything to clear out of its way. The new engine of progress, with its fierce mien, disregarded all civic amenities and took what it wanted. Most communities welcomed the intrusions and invited the

railroads into their front yards, into their streets, and along their waterfronts. Nothing was too good for them. Trains, depots, freight yards, and roundhouses, despite their noise and grime, were permitted to usurp any land that suited their purpose. Opposition was usually futile. Politicians could be bought, and the power of eminent domain, including excess condemnation, was exercised more freely to take private property wanted by railroads than it has ever been used before or since for private interests.

Politicians were just as corrupt in New York, and the railroad interests generally got what they wanted, but for many reasons the Iron Horse was curbed in New York in the beginning. One reason was that New York was a water-transportation town and the vested interests did not like the new competitor. New York's gridiron street pattern, with what Henry James called its "petty-fogging parallelograms," was based on the assumption that most of the north-south travel would be by water and that few avenues would be required. The advent of the railroads made this street system obsolete a few decades after it was adopted in 1811, but it admirably suited the railroads, which usurped most of the avenues as fast as they were opened, expediting the spread of population northward while impeding surface traffic moving in all directions. Manhattan's pattern had been inexorably set, and the community has been trying to adjust its facilities to it ever since.

Traffic congestion in lower Manhattan had already become unbearable when New York's first railroad was chartered by the Legislature. The narrow curving streets were jammed with vehicles, and many ingenious minds were working on the traffic problem. The first steam railroad, the Stockton and Darlington, had been started in England in 1825, and Stephenson's locomotive, the Rocket, was put into operation on the Liverpool and Manchester railroad in 1829. Philip Hone, as president of the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company, had sent Horatio Allen to England and had tried out the Stourbridge Lion on the gravity road near Honesdale, Pennsylvania, in 1828.

Inspired by these experiments, Thomas Emmet, the elder brother of Robert Emmet, the Irish martyr, promoted the idea of a steam railroad for New York. With Benson MacGowan and John Mason, founder of the Chemical Bank, he chartered the New York and Harlem Rail Road Company in 1831. There was a conflict over city and state jurisdiction, and the charter required approval by the Mayor and the City Council, since the railroad proposed to use city streets.¹

Although the street plan of 1811 showed avenues in what is now Midtown, few of them had been opened. The lines of what are now Fourth and Park avenues traversed the most difficult terrain in this part of the island. At that time no one thought it practical to open a thoroughfare through this rocky, hilly area, and a franchise was granted to the Harlem Rail Road with permission to

¹ David Marshall, *Grand Central* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1946).

lay its tracks along this route. By the end of 1832 the New York and Harlem was operating cars from Prince Street to Fourteenth Street, and the tracks were gradually extended north and south. It was necessary to tunnel through Murray Hill to reach 42nd Street. A station was planned at Chambers and Center streets, where the Municipal Building now stands, but the intention was to push on down to Wall Street and then to Whitehall at the Battery. Eventually, however, the line terminated at the southern end of City Hall Park, where the old Post Office later stood. The first "trains" consisted of three coaches linked together and pulled by horses, but the company planned to use steam locomotives and made attempts to do so.

It was at this point that New York's railroad history diverges from that of most communities. The noise and smoke caused by the first crude engines created widespread indignation. Several locomotives exploded, creating a panic, and mobs tore up the tracks in the Bowery. The public outcry was so great that the use of locomotives was at first prohibited below Fourteenth Street. As the population spread northward, largely as a result of improved transit, the deadline in 1859 was set at 26th Street, where a station stood on the site of the old Madison Square Garden. Later the deadline for locomotives was fixed at 42nd Street, which determined the location of the present Grand Central Terminal.

Despite its troubles in the built-up sections of Manhattan, the Harlem Rail Road continued to inch its way northward. It was slow, hard work and extremely costly to dig a roadway out of the solid schist of Manhattan. Crossing the Harlem River on the old Gouveneur Morris toll bridge, it reached White Plains by 1844. The opposition of the steamboat interests was almost as formidable as the granite. By this time the railroad was headed for Albany, but it was necessary to keep away from the riverfront towns, where the water carriers had monopolies and blocked franchises inimical to their river boats. By 1846, however, the Hudson river towns were seeking better transportation, and the Hudson River Railroad Company was formed to operate along the river's edge from New York to Greenbush, opposite Albany.

This started a race between the Harlem and the Hudson railroads. The former, in need of money to push on through the rugged interior, made a deal with the New York and New Haven Railroad, which was seeking trackage from Woodlawn into New York. In return for perpetual use of its terminal in New York, the Harlem secured funds from the New Haven which enabled it to reach Albany in 1852. Meanwhile, however, the Hudson River Railroad began service between the state capital and its terminal at Chambers and Hudson streets. The Hudson line could not meet the competition of the river steamships in carrying freight; but it was a much faster route than the Harlem, since its tracks were at water level, and it was soon taking passenger business away from the Harlem.

This was the situation when Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, at the age of seventy, gained control first of the Harlem road and then of the Hudson River line and combined them. The various stock-juggling maneuvers by which this was accomplished constitute one of the great dramas of the period, with Daniel Drew as the villain and Leonard Jerome, whose daughter was to become Winston Churchill's mother, as Vanderbilt's friend and broker. By daring, adroit, and rough methods, Vanderbilt got what he wanted from the politicians, and from certain less astute stock gamblers in Wall Street he got the money to develop his railroads.

The Hudson River was the best railroad of the period; it was well equipped and had a good water-level roadbed, and Vanderbilt concentrated on building it up. This brought him into competition with the New York Central Railroad, then operating between Albany and Buffalo. Drew, who was head of the People's Steamboat Line, made an agreement with the Central, then bringing into Albany plenty of freight, which was transferred to Drew's river steamers. The Central also made an agreement with Vanderbilt to sell through tickets and to accept freight for all-rail delivery to New York via the Hudson River Railroad, but it continued to favor Drew's steamboats. There was little Vanderbilt could do at first, but he advertised the "all-the-way-by-rail" service throughout the Central's territory and awaited his chance.

An opportunity came when the president of the Central died unexpectedly. Vanderbilt first urged the managers of the Central to accept all the freight they could get for New York and then abrogated his agreement on an hour's notice. He even stopped his own trains at Greenbush in the middle of the night and made the passengers get out of their sleeping cars and carry their luggage across the ice to the Central terminal. The Central officials, in a panic, went to the Legislature for help, and New York Central's shares tumbled. In twenty-four hours the Commodore had control of his competitor.

He paid a big price for the road and spent more building it up. As the railroad improved the shares went up in value. The Commodore held on until the time was ripe, then sold enough to drive the price down. He then bought it back at the lower price and put the profits into the growing railroad. At another time he started rumors of a big dividend in shares and sent the shares up, then dumped and bought them back. Finally the promised 80 per cent stock dividend actually came, but not until Vanderbilt had secured most of the stock. The distributed shares had a market value of \$23,000,000.²

Vanderbilt next secured control of the Erie, of which Daniel Drew was president, and brought his old rival to his knees. Drew was restored to the presidency but only on condition that he would do as he was told. When Drew, Jay Gould, and Jim Fisk planted 100,000 fraudulent shares of the Erie, the Commodore

² David Marshall, *Grand Central* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1946).

bought \$7,000,000 worth before he discovered the fraud. Vanderbilt swore out warrants for their arrest, but they escaped to New Jersey in a coach, with millions of dollars in suitcases and bales. A few days later Gould was in Albany, where he bribed state senators to pass a law legitimizing the shares. Vanderbilt went to court and Supreme Court Justice Bernard ruled that, although the Legislature had legalized the shares, the original fraud remained. Through a compromise Vanderbilt recovered five of his seven millions, after which he left the Erie, which was now so badly crippled financially that it could no longer compete with his railroads.

To protect himself from future Wall Street raids and to secure new funds, Vanderbilt, who had enlisted J. Pierpont Morgan as his financial agent, next divided his shares between the New York Stock Exchange and the London Exchange. In November, 1869, the Hudson River and the Central became the New York and Hudson River Railroad. Two weeks later ground was broken for the first Grand Central Terminal at Fourth Avenue and 42nd Street. Vanderbilt attended the dedication of his own bronze statue at his freight terminal at St. John's Park, which he bought for \$1,000,000 from the Trinity Church Corporation. This statue now stands in front of Grand Central at the level of the viaduct.

The first Grand Central Depot at 42nd Street was opened on October 9, 1871, the day of the Chicago fire. It was in reality three stations, occupied by the Harlem, the Hudson, and the New York and New Haven railroads. There was a row with the New Haven, which for years continued to pull horse-drawn trains through an opening in the depot down to the old station at Madison Square. An agreement was finally reached under which the New Haven secured the special advantages it now enjoys in Grand Central.

The old Harlem Depot gave way to Madison Square Garden, and later the site was taken by the New York Life Insurance Company. The Fourth Avenue Railroad, a subsidiary of the New York Central, became a street-car line; the Harlem Rail Road was leased to the Central-Hudson for 401 years and became the Harlem Division. The elimination of grade crossings and other improvements came about as an early work relief project to provide employment following the panic of 1833. The city under Mayor Wickham paid half of the \$3,200,000 costs of the Park Avenue tunnel from 49th Street to the Harlem flats and permitted the closing of 43rd Street. Meantime Vanderbilt had secured control of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern roads, which gave him a through route to Chicago.

Commodore Vanderbilt died in January, 1877, at the age of eighty-three, and was succeeded by his son, William Henry. Chauncey M. Depew had become attorney for the New York Central interests, and British capital was being poured into the expanding railroad. When the Central got running rights over

the Wabash to St. Louis, the historic war between the New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad began in earnest. The first skirmishes consisted of racing trains and cutting rates, but the battle was soon extended.

The Pennsylvania invaded the Central's territory by building a line from Albany to Buffalo and establishing the New York, West Shore, and Buffalo. The Central countered by buying into the Philadelphia and Reading and the Central of New Jersey, with the intention of operating over the Baltimore and Ohio to Baltimore and Washington and over the Philadelphia and Reading and the Jersey Central into New York. The most ambitious scheme of the New York Central was to build a line from New York to Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh. The South Pennsylvania line from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh became known as "Vanderbilt's Folly." This line, with 215 miles of straight right of way, was to become the Pennsylvania Turnpike and to be converted into the present high-speed motorway completed in 1940.

The fight between the New York Central and the Pennsylvania was stopped by J. P. Morgan. The territory was divided; the Central secured the West Shore line in 1885 on lease for 475 years and became the West Shore Division. Morgan also brought about the celebrated "Gentleman's Agreement" between the leading railroads which further consolidated the railroad interests and his own control. The Interstate Commerce Commission, however, had since come into existence, and the competition between the Pennsylvania and the New York Central continued in other forms.

The Vanderbilt interests had combined their railroads and now had all the advantages in Manhattan. The original Grand Central Terminal gave way to a new and enlarged building, which was opened in 1901. A year later a New Haven commuter train was standing in front of a red light when a Central-Hudson train, moving through the smoke-filled Park Avenue tunnel, crashed into it. At least seventeen persons were killed and many injured. As a result of the public outcry, it was decreed that after July 1, 1910, no steam locomotive might enter Manhattan on any track employed predominantly for passenger service. The New York Central had only eight years to electrify its passenger lines. How the present Grand Central Terminal was built and subsequent developments in the area are covered in the last chapter of the present section in this book.

After the ban on steam locomotives for passenger service, the New York Central continued to haul freight on its west-side tracks, where Death Avenue vied in infamy with the Park Avenue tunnel. The retreat from Chamber Street and St. John's Park northward was much slower than the development of improvements in the center of the island. Among these, the West Side Improvement, costing \$100,000,000 and finally completed in 1935 after twenty years of planning, litigation, and construction, was as important in its way as the better-

ments around Grand Central and along Park Avenue. The west-side freight tracks were elevated; they were made to pass through many large buildings, and above 72nd Street they were covered for most of the way along Riverside Drive, thus making possible the construction of the Henry Hudson Parkway extension at the water's edge.

Meantime the ban on steam locomotives and the New York Central monopoly had prevented the Pennsylvania and other railroads from entering Manhattan except by tunnel. The Pennsylvania Railroad first appealed to the Legislature, and a law was passed giving the Rapid Transit Board authority to grant a franchise to the railroad for constructing tunnels and a station in Manhattan. The franchise was granted in 1902. There was trouble in getting the Board of Aldermen to permit the use of certain streets, but the way was cleared when Tammany's boss Charles F. Murphy received the contract for excavating the eight-acre site. Unlike the Grand Central, which is the terminal of the New York Central and New Haven lines, the Pennsylvania is a station. The Pennsylvania tubes continue across Manhattan into Long Island, and thence back to The Bronx and on to New England via Hell Gate Bridge and the New York Connecting Railroad, which is controlled by the Pennsylvania company.

Through its control of the Long Island Rail Road, the tunnels, and Hell Gate Bridge, the Pennsylvania has a monopoly in its territory comparable to that of the New York Central in Manhattan. Direct travel between New England and the South is provided by these facilities, with the New York and New Haven enjoying the use of both the Grand Central Terminal and the Pennsylvania Station. These are the only railroads with rail connections in Greater New York except the Baltimore and Ohio, which reaches the waterfront in Staten Island. All the other railroads have terminals in New Jersey and must use either the Pennsylvania tunnels or ferries and lighters.

The development of the area around the Pennsylvania Station is told in the last chapter of this section, but the railroad's part in the development of Brooklyn and Queens emphasizes the role of railroads in shaping the Greater City. The idea of bridging or tunneling the Hudson River was agitated as early as 1850, and the Hudson River Tunnel Company was incorporated in 1873, with DeWitt C. Haskins as president. Work began the next year at the foot of 15th Street in Jersey City but was stopped by the railroads. Digging was later resumed, and by 1887 the tunneling extended 1,840 feet from the New Jersey shaft. The New York shaft was at the foot of Morton Street.³ With the aid of British capital the tunnel had been extended to 3,900 feet by 1891, when the project, again in financial difficulties, was sold to Stetson, Jennings, and Russell, New York lawyers.

³ James Blaine Walker, *Fifty Years of Rapid Transit, 1864-1917* (New York: Law Printing Company, 1918).

It was at this stage that William Gibbs McAdoo acquired the old franchise rights and organized the New York and New Jersey Railway Company in 1902. McAdoo was a member of a distinguished Georgia family impoverished by the Civil War. He entered the University of Tennessee but left in his junior year to become a clerk in the Federal Circuit Court. He studied law and, after being admitted to the bar, became division counsel for the Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia. Later he was counsel for the old Richmond and Danville, which became the Southern Railroad, and was active in politics. He came to New York in 1892 and later formed a law partnership with William McAdoo (not a relative), formerly Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Police Commissioner, and Chief Magistrate of New York City.

William Gibbs McAdoo reorganized the tunnel enterprise as the Hudson and Manhattan Company and began expanding the project. He started two additional tubes under the river, with lines up Sixth Avenue to 33rd Street. The lines were later extended to connect with the Erie, Lackawanna, and Pennsylvania terminals and with Manhattan Transfer in Newark. McAdoo built the 22-story Hudson Terminal Building and in 1909 sought to extend his lines up to Bryant Park and thence to Grand Central. Operation of the Hudson or "McAdoo" tubes started on February 25, 1908. One short-lived innovation was cars exclusively for women. McAdoo left the company in 1913 and became Secretary of the Treasury under Woodrow Wilson. During the First World War he operated the entire railroad system of the country. Mr. McAdoo married a daughter of President Wilson, sought the Democratic nomination for President in 1924, and subsequently served as Senator from California.

The Long Island Rail Road, chartered in 1834, was originally conceived as a route from New York to Boston, at a time when construction of a railroad along the Connecticut shore was considered impractical. The plan was to ferry cars from Montauk to New London across Long Island Sound. The first experiments were failures; car floats got lost in the fog, and the route became unpopular. A bridge at New London solved the Connecticut shore-line problem.

Development of the Long Island Rail Road to serve that part of the Long Island territory was primarily the work of Austin Corbin, who had made a success of his Manhattan Beach Railroad. The possibilities of this territory also impressed the Vanderbilt interests, who acquired a right of way in the center of the island which as the Motor Parkway became famous in the early days of autos, before Robert Moses built his more famous free parkways.

Chapter Twenty-three



The Evolution of Rapid Transit

THE Harlem horse railroad along Fourth Avenue, together with the Hudson River railroad on the west side, provided the first improved transit in New York. They enabled people to move farther uptown, but the lower part of Manhattan was jammed with traffic. Buses, which had replaced the coaches, caused the greatest trouble on the main thoroughfares. After the Civil War, demands for better transportation became more insistent. In addition to the steam roads, horse-car lines were then operating on Fourth, Sixth, Third, and Eighth avenues. Buses occupied the other streets. In 1864, when the Harlem Rail Road sought to extend its line to the Battery, Jacob Sharp tried to get similar rights on Broadway.¹

From all accounts and from actual photographs, conditions in the downtown streets were far worse than they are today. The streets simply could not take more traffic. Meantime, in 1863, London had started operating its initial three and three-quarter miles of the first underground steam railroad. Hugh B. Willson, a Michigan railroad man, developed plans for a similar road in New York. He received strong support, and the Metropolitan Railway Company was organized, with capital stock of \$5,000,000.

A bill was introduced early in 1864 to build this underground railroad under Broadway from the Battery to 34th Street, thence under Sixth Avenue to Central Park. Rival carriers defeated this bill and postponed underground transit in New York for nearly half a century. The only possible solution of the traffic problem, however, was to build below or above the surface. A committee of the state Senate, appointed in 1866, declared that "the traction of freight and passenger trains by ordinary locomotives on the surface of the streets is an evil which has already been endured too long and must speedily be abated."

¹ James Blaine Walker, *Fifty Years of Rapid Transit, 1864-1917* (New York: Law Printing Company, 1918).

The committee recommended underground railroads, but it also proposed that Charles T. Harvey be permitted to experiment with his patented elevated railroad. Harvey proposed to operate cars on elevated tracks by a series of endless wire ropes. Power was to be provided by stationary steam engines located 1,500 feet apart. Harvey proposed a route from the Battery up Greenwich Street to Ninth Avenue, thence to Kingsbridge and Yonkers. He also proposed a route up Broadway to 64th Street and thence to Yonkers, as well as an east-side line up Third Avenue to Harlem and on to New Rochelle.

Harvey's West Side and Yonkers Patent Railway Company was incorporated in July, 1866, and the first experiment was conducted on a half mile of elevated track from the Battery up Greenwich Street. Harvey was to charge five cents for the first two miles and a cent a mile for additional travel, and he was to pay the city 5 per cent of the net income. His scheme never got beyond the experimental stage, but he had started something and before he died, in 1913, he saw plenty of elevated railroads in operation.

The tracks of Harvey's elevated were extended to Thirteenth Street and after 1871 a company was permitted to use dummy locomotives on it. Such use was continued, with various changes in motive power, until 1902. William L. Scott, coal agent of the Pennsylvania Railroad, organized the New York Elevated Railroad Company to extend the old Harvey line and added others. Scott's company encountered formidable opposition from the Viaduct Railway, backed by Boss Tweed, who had a scheme for a grandiose elevated railroad supported on monumental stone arches. Tweed threatened to destroy his rivals, but his own scheme fell through.

For a quarter of a century after Harvey's first experiment New York saw all manner of transit schemes launched, with endless bickering and conflicts over franchises. The grafters and stock promoters were engaged in a great game to get rights to the use of the public streets. The more fantastic plans proposed included the Beach tunnel under Broadway at Murray Street, a distance of 312 feet. This was supposed to carry parcels in pneumatic cars, but it was also used by passengers. James B. Swain proposed a three-deck road in the center of the blocks, with cars for passengers and freight traveling over a street. In 1872 Dr. Rufus H. Gilbert organized the Gilbert Elevated Railway Company to build a railroad in which trains propelled by atmospheric pressure or otherwise were to travel in Gothic tubular arches. A route for this road was fixed, but the panic of 1873 intervened and stopped construction.

The first Rapid Transit Commission was created in 1875 and began fixing routes for the railroads. The Gilbert idea was adapted to open-track steam locomotives, and the route was integrated with that of the New York Elevated Railway Company. The Metropolitan Elevated Railway Company was organized,

and Cyrus W. Field, of Atlantic cable fame, and other able men became interested in transit.

Field and his associates got control of the existing elevated roads, but there was increasing opposition to the exploitation of the public by private interests. It was found that the city was giving away its valuable rights and was being plundered by politicians and schemers. Street after street was given away or sold by city officials, who pocketed the graft. At one time, when the city officials were on the point of donating the Broadway franchise, A. T. Stewart offered the city \$2,000,000 for the rights that were about to be handed out free. Mayor Grant refused the offer because there was no graft in it. Defeated rivals for franchises went to the courts, which finally declared that the city had no right to give away street franchises.

In 1854 a law was slipped through the Legislature confirming grants already made. Thereafter the railroad lobby moved on Albany. No compensation was paid to the property owners affected by the first railroads, but after 1872 their consent was required and protests were heard by commissioners appointed by the General Term of the Supreme Court.

There were many public protests over the situation, and agitation for public ownership continued. A mass meeting was held at Cooper Union in support of the Opdyke Bill to permit the city to build and operate rapid transit. The bill failed to pass, but one of the speakers, Abram S. Hewitt, who became Mayor in 1887, was the real father of modern rapid transit.

Hewitt urged city credit for the construction, the operation to be handled by private corporations. The Legislature finally permitted the city to name the Rapid Transit Commission of 1891, and William Steinway became chairman, with William E. Worthen as chief engineer and William Barclay Parsons as deputy. Parsons had been an engineer on the Erie Railroad and was chief engineer of the New York District Railway, formerly the Arcade Railway, which held the old franchise for the Beach pneumatic tube under Broadway.

The commission proposed a subway route up Broadway in 1891, but Jay Gould and Russell Sage, who then controlled the elevated railroads, did not want that competition. Parsons, who was let out, later declared that the Steinway Commission was a Tammany board. It could not sell the Broadway subway franchise; the solitary bid, by Colonel W. N. Amory, was for only \$1,000. In 1894 a new commission, headed by Alexander E. Orr, with William Barclay Parsons as chief engineer, was created. Led by Abram S. Hewitt and the Chamber of Commerce, a campaign for public ownership and private operation was conducted, and the issue was decided by referendum on November 6, 1894, with 132,647 votes for and 42,916 against public ownership.

New York having finally decided to build its own subway, the Rapid Transit Commission began laying out the route. Controversies and lawsuits followed,

and the route was changed several times. Originally it was planned to run the subway from a loop at City Hall up Broadway to 185th Street. Later it was decided to run the line up Fourth Avenue to 42nd Street, thence through 42nd Street to what is now Times Square. This change of plan, creating an awkward kink at 42nd Street, was an important factor in later developments in midtown Manhattan, particularly around Times Square and Grand Central.

It was easier to lay out a route than to solve some of the other problems. The city's financial condition after its consolidation was not good, and there was hostility toward the Manhattan subway in the other boroughs, but Morris K. Jessup, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and other leaders kept up the fight to get the subway started.

At the time of the consolidation of the city, Manhattan assessments were lower than those of the other boroughs. When these were raised they added \$42,000,000 to the city's borrowing capacity. The legal exemption of \$30,000,000 of debt carried by the counties included in Greater New York also helped to clear up the financial difficulties by 1899. There were skeptics, among them Chauncey M. Depew, who were sure that New Yorkers would develop claustrophobia and would not use the subway—preferring, no doubt, the Vanderbilt surface lines, which Depew represented. But other leaders were found who were ready to take risks.

August Belmont took the biggest financial risk. He was a stockholder in the old New York District Railway and had promoted elevated railroads in Brooklyn. He wanted to form a company to operate the new subway but could not get a charter from the Republican Legislature controlled by Platt. Nevertheless, he bought the little City Island Railroad Company in The Bronx and used its franchise to form his operating company.

John B. McDonald, who had built the Baltimore and Ohio tunnels in Baltimore, and Andrew Onderdonk were the contractors. Under Contract No. 1, let on February 21, 1900, the city agreed to pay McDonald \$35,000,000 for the work and to provide the real estate needed. The contractor was to provide the equipment, and either electricity or compressed air was to be used to propel the trains. Electricity was coming into more general use, and Frank J. Sprague, the "father of the electric trolley car," urged electric power for the subway. A plaque marks the spot in front of City Hall where ground was broken for the first New York subway, on March 24, 1900.

In 1900 the powers of the Rapid Transit Commission were broadened to cover all of Greater New York, and a subway extension to Brooklyn was approved the next year. Belmont also backed this extension. The City of Brooklyn was not far behind New York in developing railroads and has always had quite as much trouble in securing adequate transit. The Brooklyn Steam Transit Company was chartered in 1870 to operate an elevated railroad from the East

River to Flatbush. The Brooklyn Ferry and Brooklyn Bridge, of course, were the starting points for the Brooklyn lines.

The Brooklyn Elevated Railroad Company was organized in 1874 to provide "silent safety" transit from the Bridge to Woodhaven. A Fulton Street elevated was proposed by O. Kirkup, an Englishman who had worked with John Stephenson. A unique feature of this scheme was that meetings to raise money for the railroad were opened with prayer, and this brought on a row with T. DeWitt Talmadge, the noted divine. Kirkup's route was later changed to Wiloughby street, and he died in poverty. General Roy Stone, who had displayed his single-rail invention at Fairmont Park in Philadelphia, tried to put his hanging cars in operation in Brooklyn in 1877 and 1878, but his project never advanced far. Much more impressive than any of his colleagues was W. Fontaine Bruff, an English engineer for the Brooklyn Elevated Company, who in 1879 drove to work in a stylish carriage.

After the Rapid Transit Commission was created in 1875, the Kings County Elevated Railroad Company, the second in Brooklyn, was started. The Brooklyn Elevated Company's route was changed to Myrtle Avenue, but the Brooklyn aldermen were arrested for ignoring an injunction of the court in 1885. Under Mayor Low the first five miles of this road were put in operation. The route ran from York and Washington streets to Hudson, thence up Park to Grand avenue, then up Lexington Avenue to Broadway and on to East New York. The Fulton Street Elevated to Brooklyn Bridge and the ferry was not opened until 1888, five years after the bridge was opened. While the bridge was under construction the plans were changed so that trains could be operated over it.

The other East River bridges were built to accommodate the rapid transit lines, which were in difficulties because of the crushes created at the Manhattan terminals. The land on which the Municipal Building now stands was acquired to provide more space for the Brooklyn Bridge trains. Later the Centre Street subway loop was proposed. The elaborate train sheds at both ends of the Brooklyn Bridge, erected in 1912, were acclaimed as great improvements. They had become obsolete eyesores, however, when during the Second World War, along with the scrapping of many elevated lines, they were demolished to secure needed metal.

When the Interborough Rapid Transit Company was formed in 1902, it leased the Manhattan elevated roads then controlled by Jay Gould, thus achieving a monopoly of rapid transit in Manhattan. The surface lines in Manhattan and The Bronx were controlled by Thomas F. Ryan and William C. Whitney through the Metropolitan Street Railway Company, the extravagant leases and watered stock of which were notorious. To meet the competition of the city subway the Metropolitan company proposed a competing subway to come down from The Bronx to Fifteenth Street via Lexington Avenue, then down Broad-

way and Williams street to the Battery, with transfers to surface lines. To complete their plans the Metropolitan and the Interborough companies were merged in 1906.

All the new construction and the stock juggling had not improved transit conditions. Before the subway to Brooklyn was opened in 1906 the crush at Brooklyn Bridge had become intolerable. There was agitation for more lines and connections across the East River bridges. Charles E. Hughes, who was elected Governor in 1906, personally visited Brooklyn Bridge at rush hours and, moved by what he saw and by the insistent public clamor, was prompted to do something about it. He abolished the old Board of Rapid Transit Railroad Commissioners and set up a new Public Service Commission. New York City was designated as the First District and was to have its own commission. This commission was headed by William R. Willcox; the other members were William McCarroll and Edward M. Bassett, of Brooklyn, and Milo R. Maltbie—then secretary of the Municipal Art Commission—and John E. Eustis of The Bronx. Travis H. Whitney, who was made a commissioner in 1916 by Governor Whitman, became secretary. One of the first acts of the commission was to investigate the Metropolitan-Interborough merger. It also tried to develop a comprehensive rapid-transit plan which would make better use of the old and new bridges. The so-called Triborough Plan, brought out in 1908, provided among other lines for a Centre Street loop in Manhattan and for the Flatbush and Fourth Avenue lines in Brooklyn.

Mayor Gaynor co-operated with the commission by appointing a committee—composed of George McAneny, and Borough Presidents Miller of Manhattan and Cromwell of Richmond—to work with it. William G. McAdoo, of the Hudson and Manhattan Company offered to construct and operate the Triborough system if connections were permitted with his New Jersey tubes, but later he withdrew his proposal. Otherwise there were no bidders.

Meantime the Interborough Rapid Transit Company made another proposal. The Steinway Tunnel, from 42nd Street, Manhattan, to Van Alst Street in Long Island City, had been completed at a cost of \$8,000,000. Its builders had been authorized by the Legislature as the New York and Long Island Railway Company. The Interborough acquired the stock of this company and proposed to turn the tunnel over to the city. The Brooklyn Manhattan Transit Company also proposed to build certain subways and extensions of elevated and surface lines in Brooklyn and Queens and to build a Broadway subway in Manhattan.

These proposals led to the important conferences between the Transit Commissioners, the McAneny committee, and the transit companies out of which came the Dual Transit System. The conferences, held in the Old Tribune Building on Park Row, were prolonged and tedious. For six months the competing interests wrangled and traded with representatives of the city and of the

state commission representing the public. On June 5, 1911, a joint report was issued, setting forth the agreement that had been reached.

In general the Dual Transit contracts, finally executed on March 19, 1913, divided the city between the two rapid transit companies, which had agreed on a policy as to new lines to be constructed and operated. If one company refused to construct or operate a certain line, it was to be offered to the other. The contracts were detailed and highly technical, and were to run for forty-nine years. The five-cent fare was written into the agreements at the insistence of the companies, which were afraid that the three-cent fare just introduced in Cleveland by Tom Johnson would lead to a demand for a lower fare in New York. One of the interesting changes made was the construction of new lines in Manhattan and the institution of the shuttle service between Grand Central and Times Square. The Steinway Tunnel was taken over to serve Queens, and the two transit companies used the same tracks to Flushing.

There was some opposition to the Dual Transit System. John Purroy Mitchel, then President of the Board of Aldermen, did not like certain features of it, but operations under the new arrangement were inaugurated on January 1, 1917. The new contracts doubled the existing mileage by providing extensions to cost \$330,000,000. The city thus gained badly needed facilities, but the companies had first call on revenues while placing the burden of deficits on the city. The companies at least thought they were assured continuing large profits.

The Dual Transit System had been in operation only a year when Mayor Hylan took office after a vigorous campaign waged on the transit issue. Hylan, with the support of William Randolph Hearst, had urged municipal ownership and operation as the only solution of the transit problem. He continued his war on the transit interests, determined to deliver their death blow by having the city build a competing subway system. The five-cent fare became a live issue when the companies, to meet increased costs, attempted to break their contracts and raise the fare. Conditions on the rapid transit lines were appalling, and new areas were demanding transit extensions. Securing the necessary legislation, Hylan initiated the Independent Subway System. The conditions imposed by the Legislature were that the new lines should become self-sustaining after three years.

To meet the costs of construction, Mayor Hylan adopted a pay-as-you-go plan under which additional taxes raised by increased assessments would pay a substantial part of the construction costs. The city's subways were started under this plan, with John H. Delaney as head of the newly created Board of Transportation. The construction costs were much higher than anticipated, and long before the city lines were completed it was clear that they could not be made self-sustaining on a five-cent fare. Since the city was committed, however,

it went on with construction as long as it could raise the money. And the politicians of all parties either were committed to maintaining the five-cent fare or did not dare advocate an increase. Finally, after \$152,000,000 had been spent on construction, the subway work ceased and eighteen miles of subways were left unfinished when the city's credit was impaired by the depression and the scandals of the Walker regime.

When Mayor LaGuardia took office in 1934 he re-established the city's credit and secured funds from the Federal government to complete parts of the new subway that had been started and to enable the main lines to be put into operation. LaGuardia's next efforts to improve transit conditions were directed toward unification of the private and city lines. The first attempts of A. A. Berle, Jr., and Samuel Seabury, representing the city, were not successful. In June, 1940, however, unification was brought about and the city took over the I.R.T. and B.M.T. companies. The combined systems, including the surface and bus lines of the B.M.T. have since been operated by the Board of Transportation. The total mileage is 554 miles of route and 1,237 miles of track, carrying an average of more than seven million passengers a day.

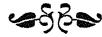
During the Second World War it was not possible to continue construction, but increased costs of construction and operation and the demands for capital funds for other purposes would in any event have prevented the city from substantially improving its transit. With an annual operating deficit of some \$70,000,000, and with commitments against the legal borrowing capacity of the city to within \$100,000,000 of the debt limit, no funds were available for new subways.

At the end of LaGuardia's administration, in 1946, many segments of the city's system, as planned, remained incompletd, and conditions on most of the rapid transit lines were as bad as ever, if not worse. The five-cent fare remained a live political issue. Insistent demands that the fare be increased to permit the city to improve its transit were at first rejected by the O'Dwyer administration, but late in 1947 Mayor O'Dwyer boldly proposed that the Board of Transportation be permitted to raise fares sufficiently to cover the operating deficit. By that time the city was facing a crisis growing out of its inability to provide essential improvements, such as hospitals and schools. At the same time, Mayor O'Dwyer announced that he would seek the aid of the Legislature in increasing the city's borrowing and taxing limits.

Putting rapid transit on a self-sustaining basis was the most important single step the city itself could take to improve its financial condition. This had become imperative, not only to provide capital funds for other improvements but also to rehabilitate the transit system itself and assure safe and efficient operation. Meantime the Board of Transportation had plans for extensions and improvements to cost \$1,000,000,000, including a Second Avenue subway which, on

completion, would permit the removal of the old Third Avenue Elevated Line, the last of the overhead structures which had defaced Manhattan ever since Charles T. Harvey started his patented elevated railroad in Greenwich Street in 1866.

Chapter Twenty-four



Civic Art and Architecture

THAT the first permanent buildings on Manhattan Island were located on lower Broadway, where skyscrapers were to soar three centuries later, was a matter of chance. No one could have foreseen the slow but irresistible spread and upward thrust of structures that were to rise like a volcanic mountain chain, surging into the sky and spewing over the entire terrain.

The early Dutch, however, had a clear idea of what kind of town they wanted to build. A view of Amsterdam, painted by Cornelis Anthonies in 1536, shows a remarkable similarity between the old Dutch city and the conformation of lower Manhattan. Especially striking is the canal splitting the tongue of land between the main waterways, with fortifications guarding the tip. Was it a mere coincidence that the first improvement undertaken by the Dutch was construction of a broad canal, up the center of the island, which if it had remained would have made this part of Manhattan a fair modern copy of ancient Amsterdam? At any rate, the Dutch were orderly; they believed in plans and they built solidly and well. Before long they were putting up structures that not only were serviceable but in addition possessed elements of enduring beauty in line and form. Some of the old Dutch houses still standing in the Metropolitan area are among the most charming examples of Colonial architecture. Many of the public buildings, and especially the churches of the earliest days, were fine examples of the architecture of their period, and their influence persisted long after new types of buildings and a more or less indigenous architecture emerged.

The dominant factors in New York building, however, have always been more directly related to materials, techniques, local economics, and more particularly land economics based on transportation. In general, America for over two centuries had more and better building materials than Europe, but it lacked compe-

tent native architects, engineers, and skilled workers. The occasional mansions, manor houses, and other pretentious buildings of the earlier periods might have been erected anywhere. In the main they were copies or adaptations of foreign structures—English, Dutch, French, and German—or imitations of New England or Southern Colonial buildings. Such structures disappeared from lower Manhattan at an early date, when overcrowding put a premium on land and the juxtaposition of incompatible uses made living conditions undesirable.

Church steeples topped New York's skyline, and places of worship were its most impressive architectural features, until Greater New York came into being. Trinity's 284-foot steeple dominated the area where it is now so conspicuously diminutive. The original Trinity was built in 1697 and destroyed in the great fire of 1776. The present Trinity, of which Richard Upjohn was the architect, was erected in 1839-46, after the second building, rebuilt after the Revolution, had been condemned as unsafe and torn down. It is a fine example of Gothic architecture done in the brownstone so much in use at the time. Members of the Astor family gave the reredos and the doors, the work of Karl Bitter, Massey Rhind, and Charles H. Niehaus, all foreign-born artists. The competition for their design had been won by Bitter, a young immigrant of twenty-two, without friends or influence. Having attracted the attention of Richard M. Hunt and George B. Post, leading architects of the time, Bitter was to win fame for his work at the Columbian Exposition.¹

St. Paul's, where George Washington worshiped after being sworn in as the first President, miraculously escaped the great fire of 1776 which destroyed the first Trinity and most of the buildings in the area. McBean, the architect of St. Paul's, was influenced by Sir Christopher Wren's work, and the old church, with its back to Broadway, is a noble structure. But St. John's Church is said to have been the most satisfying piece of architecture in New York until the City Hall was erected by John McComb, who was also the architect of the church located in St. John's Park, which was owned by the Trinity Corporation. St. John's Church was modeled after St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. For half a century St. John's Park was a fashionable center. It was finally sold to Vanderbilt and the Hudson River Railroad Company for \$1,000,000, in 1869, and became a freight yard. A great manufacturing center, with truckways leading from ground to roof, is now planned for the site, which is near the Holland Tunnel.

City Hall, begun in 1803 and first occupied in 1811, is regarded as one of the finest American buildings of the period. Credit for this rarely beautiful structure is generally given to John McComb, who built it, but according to I. N. Phelps Stokes's *Iconography of Manhattan Island* the design was the work

¹ Helen W. Henderson, *A Loiterer in New York* (New York: George H. Doran, 1917).

of the French architect Joseph F. Mangin, McComb's senior partner. Mangin and McComb won the competition for the design and divided the prize money—\$350. The committee representing the city government demanded the cutting down of the plans to save expense. Mangin refused to agree to the changes, and on the modified plans later submitted by McComb his name was erased.

A new committee later authorized retention of most of the original plan and appointed McComb architect with complete control. He received \$6.00 a day and did a wonderful job. The marble, from West Stockbridge, Massachusetts, cost \$35,000, but brownstone was used on the north side to save money. John Lemaire the carver, who received \$4.00 a day, contributed greatly to the finished work. He also did the frames for the notable collection of paintings in the building. It was restored in 1907 by Grosvenor Atterbury and John A. Tompkins. For many years Mangin and his brother had offices at 68 Chambers Street and he was the architect of the first St. Patrick's Cathedral. McComb was a great architect as well as builder, and he designed many creditable structures; however, since the basic composition of City Hall is French the experts say it could not have been done by him.

With some exceptions, architecture and building in New York, as in the country at large, was lacking in distinction for a century after the Revolution. The classic revival began in the United States, where Jefferson and other leaders were greatly influenced by Roman and Hellenic ideals and traditions, with the result that we find neo-classic governmental buildings in Washington and elsewhere, along with much cheap imitation in private structures built during the first century of the Republic. Many of the finest existing early buildings in New York and Brooklyn date from the period between 1820 and 1850, notably the Sub-Treasury building, the lower colonnade of the National City Bank on Wall Street, the north side of Washington Square and all the best old houses of Greenwich Village and Chelsea, as well as many handsome churches.

In New York this early influence, appallingly degenerated, may be seen in the cast-iron fronts and ornamentation of buildings erected between 1850 and 1880. Along with the interminable rows of brownstone residences they gave the city a drab, monotonous appearance both in form and color. By comparison, such structures as the City Hall and Grace Church (severely criticized by Walt Whitman, when it was opened in 1846) are gay and festive. Old New York was not devoid of notable monuments, however, as we have seen, and it was developing artists and architects who were raising the retrogressive aesthetic standard of the post-Civil War period and creating indigenous civic art forms.

As the population increased, every effort was made to crowd as many bricks as possible on the available land in lower Manhattan. Tenements were built higher and higher until they became a health menace to those who had to climb the stairs. They were also a great fire hazard, and walls collapsed at times.

As a result, these and other buildings were severely limited as to height until after 1850, when elevators began to appear. The Tower Building, designed by Bradford Lee Gilbert and erected in 1886, was thirteen stories high. In 1893 the Manhattan Life Insurance Building on Broadway pushed up sixty feet above Trinity's steeple. But this was not the first skyscraper. Ten years before, William Le Baron Jenney had erected the Home Insurance Building in Chicago. This ten-story fireproof structure was the first of the skyscraper type. New York lagged behind Chicago in erecting such buildings partly because of the rigidity of her old building code, under which it was difficult to get approval for the new type of construction fast coming into vogue.²

Meantime, however, New York had taken the lead, in America, in producing new materials that were to revolutionize building construction. The many-sided Thomas Paine accelerated this revolution, as he had provided the spark plug for the political revolt of the Colonies. Paine passed his closing years in a small house on Bleecker Street. When Barrow Street was opened after his death, it was at first called Reason Street, after Paine's *Age of Reason*. The house where he died was demolished when Grove Street was opened in 1836. One of Paine's radical ideas was that bridges could be constructed of iron. Encouraged by Jefferson, he went to England and tried to advance his scheme. He was not successful, but the Sunderland Bridge in England, a pioneer effort in the use of iron and cables for suspension bridges, is said to follow Paine's concept.³

As a result of reasoning by analogy, and after various experiments, iron pillars were used in a British textile factory. Later, iron was used for the entire frame of an English textile mill, and a factory built with an iron skeleton was erected in New York in 1848. Peter Cooper, who built the first locomotive in America, had made a fortune in the glue business and with his son-in-law, Abram S. Hewitt, was operating an ironworks in Trenton, New Jersey. Although the most important part of the iron business at the time was in making rails for the railroads that were being built all over the country, the Cooper-Hewitt company began experimenting with iron beams.

Cooper Union was being planned and Mr. Cooper decided to make this the first New York building to be erected with structural iron. In 1853, however, before construction had actually begun, the publishing plant of James Harper on Pearl Street was destroyed by fire. Harper was anxious to rebuild at once, and he wanted a building that would be less of a fire risk. Peter Cooper, appreciating the advertising value such a move would have for his ironworks, waived priority on his rolled-iron beams and they went into the new Harper

² W. A. Starrett, *Skyscrapers and the Men Who Build Them* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928).

³ Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time, and Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941).

plant, which thus became the first building to use rolled-iron beams. Cooper Union was later constructed with iron beams, and wells were left for elevators which Cooper was sure would soon be in use.

One problem of skyscraper construction, then, was well started toward a solution, but the height of such structures was still limited by the lack of elevators. Elisha Groves Otis demonstrated an elevator at the New York Exposition in the Crystal Palace in 1853, but the first passenger elevator was not installed until 1857. This was in a department store at Broadway and Broome Street. Two years later the old Fifth Avenue Hotel advertised its "vertical screw railway." The first steam hoist was installed in the St. James Hotel in 1868. The first electric elevator was placed in the Demarest Building at 335 Fifth Avenue in 1889.

Between 1850 and 1880 more and more cast iron was used in buildings. James Bogardus began prefabricating parts, and Balthaser Kreischer introduced tile brick in 1870. The Civil War brought a boom to the iron foundries around New York, where cannon and other iron products were made. With the end of the war these over-expanded plants began turning out cast iron for buildings. Over large sections of lower Manhattan the cast-iron pillars, cornices, and windows of this period are still standing. The old A. T. Stewart Building (now part of Wanamaker's) is a well-known example. New York had learned how to construct larger, higher, and safer buildings, but their architectural design still left much to be desired.

Charles Bulfinch was one of the best of our early American architects. He was born in Boston in 1763, graduated from Harvard, and visited Europe as well as New York and Philadelphia early in life. He was influenced by Jefferson's neo-classical tendencies, and he designed the Massachusetts State Capitol, which was the outstanding public building in the United States in 1800. In 1817 President Monroe made him architect of the United States Capitol, where his chief contribution was the detailed form of the western front.

Bulfinch inaugurated a reformation in the domestic architecture of New England, where he introduced the delicate detail of the Adam style. A good part of old Boston bears the stamp of his genius, and examples of his work and that of his followers are scattered widely over New England. Fifty years after his death in 1844, his buildings were to inspire a revolution in American architectural taste.

The Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia stimulated an architectural revival, slowly developing, that was to mean much to the United States. Leadership in this movement came from New York. Many individuals and architectural firms contributed to this development. Outstanding among the various groups was the firm of McKim, Mead & White. Charles Follen McKim was the senior member and dominant figure in this company for many years,

but Stanford White during his active years became the best known of the many able men associated with it.

Stanford White was born in 1853 and at the age of nineteen began the practice of architecture with H. H. Richardson, an exponent of the exotic Romanesque, who inspired White and taught him that architecture was a fine art. Young White made a trip to New England in 1877 with McKim, Mead, and W. B. Bigelow to study and make drawings of Bulfinch houses and other Colonial work around Marblehead, Salem, Newburyport, and Portsmouth. They were looking for the best indigenous architecture, and probably had no idea that in a short time they would be leaders in an architectural revival.

Shortly after this pilgrimage, Stanford White replaced Bigelow in the McKim-Mead firm. He made his first trip to Europe in 1878, where he became enamored of the new classic work then being done in Europe. White believed that all things intrinsically fine can be brought into harmony, and although he followed classical precedents his work has a special charm of its own. Especially notable examples of Stanford White's work are the Washington Arch; the Prison Ship Martyr's Monument in Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn, a modification of a design for Belle Isle Park, Detroit; the Century Association and the Metropolitan Club; the old Madison Square Garden, with Saint Gaudens's Diana high above it; the old New York *Herald* Building, of which only the clock and bell ringers remain; and the old Gorham and Tiffany buildings on Fifth Avenue. The Madison Square Presbyterian Church, his last work, was torn down in 1919.⁴

Many notable architects participated in the revival that took place during the two decades from 1890-1910, including Richard M. Hunt, H. H. Richardson, Bradford Lee Gilbert, Cass Gilbert, George B. Post, Thomas Nash, Ernest Flagg, George B. Baker, Carrère and Hastings, Breck Trowbridge, Goodhue Livingston, Whitney Warren, and others. This period was especially prolific in distinctive buildings, most of them the work of men who either worked together or followed similar concepts and ideals.

The so-called New York school was given its supreme opportunity in designing the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. The classical movement spread over the country during the next four decades. City planning, as well as landscaping and architecture, received tremendous impetus from the Chicago fair. However, there was plenty of criticism, even at the time, of the attempt to revive styles of architecture that called for embellishments and decorations associated with the essentially superficial features of current European design.

Exponents of modern functional design have declared that American architecture was set back half a century by the pseudo-classic work of this period.

⁴ A. H. Granger, *Charles Follen McKim* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1913).

The conflict between the Chicago and New York schools raged for years. The former, under Louis Sullivan, was persistent in its search for cleaner design, better suited to modern materials and purposes. The Chicago school, in addition to evolving the first skyscrapers, was to divide and produce such extremists as Frank Lloyd Wright, credited with fathering modern "organic" architecture.

Meantime buildings in New York were getting bigger and taller all the time. The Whitehall Building, built facing the Battery in 1900, was twenty stories high and was to have an addition in ten years. New architects and methods were being developed that were to revolutionize both design and construction. But the changes in fundamental design were gradual, as the classic styles were adapted to more modern types of buildings, and the age-long battle between old and new continued.

Results of this struggle are everywhere apparent in New York, where imitation Greek and Roman temples shoulder more modern structures, and lesser conflicts are to be noted in the designs of separate public buildings. The Hall of Records, at Chambers and Centre streets, built in 1901, with its elaborate embellishments inside and out, is a good example of the neo-classic. Across the way the mammoth Municipal Building, straddling Chambers Street designed by McKim, Mead & White, summarizes in stone the head-on collision of the tendencies then apparent.

The Municipal Building, completed in 1913, dramatizes the effects of combining classic and modern architecture in a public office building. Far beneath the massive structure are subway lines and passages that make it a great rapid transit center. At the ground level it bridges Chambers Street and has sufficient space around it to accommodate a reasonable amount of street traffic. Nevertheless, standing as it does at the entrance of Brooklyn Bridge, where City Hall Park causes the bridge traffic to concentrate, the building is isolated in a turbulent traffic swirl, especially at rush hours.

The stupendous colonnade in front and the open spaces at ground level (the north end has been enclosed) are in scale with the twenty-five full floors and the additional twelve-story tower. The monumental treatment at the lower level, with the incidental embellishment, is not out of keeping with the large structure, which mounts upward with clean unbroken lines after the manner of the most modern of skyscrapers. Then begins the extraordinary superstructure with the tower, culminating in a classical Temple of Love, surmounted by Adolph Weinman's figure of "Civic Fame." Inside there is considerable waste space in the wide marble corridors, but it was all in keeping with the period and stands as the first skyscraper for public offices.

Foley Square, to the north, is an unfinished mixture of old and new, with Guy Lowell's unique hexagonal Supreme Court building of classical design, between the towering Federal Courthouse, of more modern design, by Cass

Gilbert, Jr., and the more practical State Office Building. Farther up on Centre Street the mammoth modern Criminal Courts building, showing the hand of Harvey Wiley Corbett, made the antique Tombs, across the street, seem medieval before it was demolished in 1948.

Warren and Wetmore started the Chelsea Piers in 1902. Cass Gilbert, Sr., did the West Street Building in 1905. Carrere and Hastings were doing the monumental approaches to Manhattan Bridge, and other pretentious building operations were under way. The Flatiron Building, erected on a sliver of land at 23rd Street, between Broadway and Fifth Avenue, had proved a number of things. Steel frame construction had made it possible to derive many times the profits formerly to be had from land. Even small plots could support an indefinite number of floors. Furthermore, there was tremendous advertising value in such conspicuousness. This value, as was soon to become apparent, depended partly upon location; otherwise it was necessary to build ever higher, to catch the eye. The Flatiron Building was a sensation and probably received more publicity in a given time than any structure ever before erected in New York. But the location was important. The first large electric sign was erected on the plot later occupied by the Flatiron Building. It proclaimed "Manhattan Beach Swept by Ocean Breezes!" and was the beginning of the era of flashing signs that have made Broadway the "Great White Way."

The Singer Sewing Machine Company was the first big enterprise to grasp the advertising value of a towering building, and it engaged Ernest Flagg to design its building. Flagg was the first architect to adopt skyscraper construction to a high tower. The Singer Building was completed in 1908 and for eighteen months had the distinction of topping the New York skyline. When Gatti-Casazza arrived in New York to become director of the Metropolitan Opera Company he was duly impressed with the Singer Building when it was pointed out to him as he came up the bay. The English language was as new to him as American advertising methods, and he assumed that the "Singer" Building was the opera house!

It is said that mixed motives led Frank W. Woolworth to erect the building that is such a distinctive feature of the city. Woolworth opened his first Brooklyn store in 1895 and had a branch on Sixth avenue, Manhattan, the next year. Within five years he had moved into a mansion on Fifth avenue. He headed a \$65,000,000 merger of small retail stores in 1913. This unique genius wanted to build in New York a structure in keeping with his far-flung and phenomenally successful chain of 5 and 10 cent stores. By 1918, Woolworth had one thousand stores. He died the following year, leaving an estate which if held intact would have been valued at \$200,000,000 by 1924.

It is said that he sought to borrow money from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and was turned down. At that time the Metropolitan had

just completed its new large building at 23rd Street and Madison Square, the tower of which was then the tallest in New York. Piqued by his rebuff by the Metropolitan, Woolworth commissioned Cass Gilbert to erect a building that would top the Metropolitan Tower and perhaps stand for years as the tallest building in the world.

Cass Gilbert had designed the United States Custom House at the Battery and other notable buildings. In Frank Woolworth he had a new kind of client and a new kind of architectural problem. Gilbert was a younger man than those who brought about the classical renaissance and, although he leaned toward the classical, he was fully aware of the potentialities inherent in the new kinds of construction and saw no reason why skyscrapers should not be beautiful.

His problem, as stated by Louis J. Horowitz, was "to find a scale that would create a pleasing effect from the ground, close by, as well as from a distance."⁵ He wanted to create the Gothic quality of lace in stone on a building of tremendous height; this effect was attained by using white terra cotta. His cathedral-like structure possesses rare grace and charm and at the time had the distinction of being New York's highest skyscraper.

President Wilson, from the White House, opened the Woolworth Building on April 24, 1913, when it was characterized as a "Cathedral of Commerce" by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman. Woolworth's office was copied after the Empire Room in Napoleon's palace, with a life-sized bust of Napoleon in bronze, the Emperor's clock, and a painting of Napoleon seated in his coronation robes with Josephine by his side. In the ornate lobby, carved busts of Woolworth, Cass Gilbert, and Louis J. Horowitz, the builder, are worked into the cornices. But the Woolworth Building is something more than the projection of a monumental ego. It represents an artistic triumph for both architect and builder, who had to surmount all the technical and other difficulties encountered in designing and constructing the first large structure of this type. Although it has been superseded by taller and more modern buildings, the Woolworth Building is still popular.

The first public statuary erected in New York was the ill-fated equestrian statue of George III. A marble statue of William Pitt, ordered at the same time and erected at Wall Street and Broad out of gratitude to Chatham for his part in repealing the Stamp Act, was overturned and mutilated by British soldiers during the occupation, in revenge for the indignities to their monarch. New Yorkers also named a street (now Park Row) for Chatham, as well as Chatham Square. Pitt Street is still on the map.

New York did not possess much sculpture until nearly a century after the Revolution. John and William Frazee opened a "marble shop" in Greenwich Street about 1818 and carved tablets and tombstones. In St. Paul's there is a bust

⁵ Louis J. Horowitz and Borden Sparkes, *The Towers of New York* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1937).

of John Wells, a prominent lawyer, by John Frazee, which is said to be the "first marble portrait from a native hand."⁶

The first equestrian statue to be erected in New York after the one of George III which was destroyed in 1776 was the mounted figure of George Washington in Union Square. It marks the spot where the citizens of the city met the Commander in Chief of the victorious Continental Army when he re-entered New York after the British evacuation on November 25, 1783. Horatio Greenough, an early American professional sculptor, who made the marble statue of Washington for the Capitol, projected the scheme for the New York statue, but the work was done by Henry Kirke Brown.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, American sculpture, like our literature, had been largely of foreign inspiration. Greenough was greatly influenced by the Danish Thorwaldsen and by the classic revival in Italy. It is interesting to note that Henry Kirke Brown was working on his equestrian Washington at the same time Whitman was developing the first poems of *Leaves of Grass* and that the statue in Union Square was unveiled on July 4, 1856, a year after Whitman's first poems were published. Indigenous art was germinating, and a national movement was slowly gathering force. Brown began as a portrait painter and later turned to sculpture. He spent four years in Italy, but when he returned he did Indians and other American subjects, including a statue of DeWitt Clinton for Greenwood Cemetery.

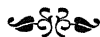
Brown established his studies in the Rotunda on Broadway, where the National Academy had its first home. John Quincy Adams Ward was one of his pupils and assisted in making the Washington statue. With Clark Mills, Brown is credited with leading the revolt against classicism in sculpture and establishing an American school. Ward became an outstanding rebel. He went abroad, but he said that if art is a living thing "an American sculptor will serve himself and his age best by working at home."

Ward did the statue of Washington on the steps of the old Sub-Treasury and that of Henry Ward Beecher in front of Brooklyn Borough Hall, and other examples of his work are to be found in many parts of the city. He was the teacher of Augustus St. Gaudens, and the latter, along with John la Farge, was a primary influence in shaping the tastes of Stanford White and the other architects, sculptors, painters, and decorators whose work was to transform New York before the turn of the century. When a committee was trying to decide on a sculptor to do the statue of Admiral Farragut in Madison Square, Ward said: "Give the young man a chance," and secured the commission for his pupil St. Gaudens, then thirty. The work was done in Paris. Stanford White, twenty-eight years old at the time, was engaged to do the pedestal. The Farragut statue, unveiled in 1881, was a triumph for both young men. St. Gaudens and White

⁶ William Dunlap, *History of the Art of Design* (New York, 1834).

collaborated on many works in the next thirty years. George Edwin Bissell's statue of Chancellor Ward, in the Trinity churchyard, and his sitting statue of Abraham De Peyster, in Bowling Green; the Garibaldi in Washington Square; Ward's Horace Greeley, his bust of Alexander Lyman Holley in Washington Square, and his Washington at the Sub-Treasury; Frederick MacMonnies's Nathan Hale; Plassman's Benjamin Franklin in City Hall Park; Frederic Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty and his Lafayette in Union Square—these are other notable examples of outdoor sculpture in New York before the consolidation of the city. For fifty years, the Art Commission has passed on public structures and monuments in the city.

Chapter Twenty-five



From the Tallest Tower in Town

TO SEE modern New York, the tower of the Empire State Building offers the best vantage point. Winner in the feverish race of skyscrapers that reached its climax as depression settled over the city following the bank panic of 1933, the world's tallest building lacks the grace of Cass Gilbert's "Cathedral of Commerce" and the amenities of Rockefeller Center, but it has dignity as well as size and is a balanced centerpiece for the other towers of New York. Erected on a \$16,000,000 site formerly occupied by the original Waldorf-Astoria, it was built in record time. Demolition of the hotel started on October 1, 1929, and the new office building was opened May 1, 1931. At times construction advanced $4\frac{1}{2}$ stories a week.

The full height of the Empire State is 1,250 feet, whereas its nearest rival in height, the Chrysler Building, ends in a pinnacle at 1,046 feet. The Chrysler is unique among structures of its kind in that it is on tax-free land and in lieu of taxes pays ground rent to Cooper Union, owner of the valuable plot the building occupies at Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street. Another distinction claimed for the Chrysler Building is that Eamon De Valera was born on its site. Third place in the sky-piercing competition that brought the building boom of the twenties to a close goes to the Bank of the Manhattan Building, far downtown at 40 Wall Street; this is a 71-story building 927 feet high. The Empire State, however, is an improvement over most of its rivals in that it is nearly all tower, which gives its neighbors, as well as its tenants, more light and air.

In the beginning, the skyscrapers were "stunts," conceived as super-billboards to advertise some firm, individual, or enterprising institution. This race toward the sky, which started in 1912 with the Singer Building, continued until the First World War checked construction.

Except for a few scattered structures, there was a lull until some time after the First World War. Passage of the Zoning Resolution in 1916 was supposed

to curb excessive bulk and height; more land was required to carry buildings as high as the Woolworth tower or to support such bulk as that represented by the Equitable Building. However, the greatest of building booms got under way in the early twenties and continued until some time after the Wall Street crash.

It takes a lot of money to erect a skyscraper or any sizable building in New York. Only large corporations or groups could afford to finance them in the beginning, but a way was found to overcome this difficulty and to bring small investors into the game. The United States profited enormously by the First World War, and New York got more than her share. Banks and lending institutions held vast savings that were available for first mortgages, and they were looking for investment opportunities. New York real estate had through the years been considered the soundest of investments. All that was needed was venture capital. This was the situation that led to the tremendous over-expansion of the "title guarantee" business.

Many of the buildings erected during the great boom were to meet the legitimate needs for space accumulated during the war. Corporations of all kinds required augmented quarters. New hotels, theaters—especially motion picture houses—apartments, and office buildings were in demand. Merely to meet this need would have created a sizable boom. But the speculative builders were not content to stop there. In this they were aided and abetted by the banks, the lending institutions, the politicians, and the community at large, which sank its money in "guaranteed" mortgages.

From the tallest of these structures it is easy to identify and call the roll of the buildings that dominate New York's skyline. Far downtown, on the west side, the Downtown Athletic Club (530 feet) towers over its surroundings, with the New York Telephone Building, at 140 West Street, designed by Ralph Walker and erected in 1926, a close rival in height. On the east are the City Bank-Farmers Trust (750 feet), by Benjamin Wistar Morris III, and the Cities Service Building (965 feet), by Clinton and Russell. The closest rival of the latter is the Bank of the Manhattan Company (830 feet) on the west side, started in 1929 from plans by H. Craig Severance and Yasuo Matsui.

The *World Telegram* and New York *Post* buildings, the Hudson Terminal, and the Federal Building on the west side are balanced on the east by Knickerbocker Village and other housing projects. The Woolworth (792 feet), the Irving Trust Company (654 feet), the Municipal Building (580 feet), the Federal Courthouse with its gold-leaf tower, and the Equitable and Transportation buildings (551 feet) are the more conspicuous towers in lower Manhattan.

There is a great gap in the building peaks between Foley Square and the midtown area. The Metropolitan Tower (657 feet) and New York Life Insurance Company Building (617 feet) start the upward range and outrank their older competitors, the Singer (612 feet) and Daniel H. Burnham's earlier 1902 won-

der, the Flatiron (Fuller) Building, with its scanty twenty stories. But the bulky Starrett-Lehigh Building and Henry Mandel's London Terrace on the west side balance the hospital, power plants, and new housing projects along the East River before the midtown area is reached.

Midtown Manhattan began its more rapid development in 1901, when the street cars were electrified, and a boom followed the opening of the first subway in 1905. The Hotel Astor was built in 1904 by William C. and Frederick A. Muschenheim. Electric power also ended the sweat shops and revolutionized the garment industry, which first centered at Lispenard and Walker streets. Jersey blouses were giving way to shirtwaists; cocktails were two for 25 cents at the old Waldorf-Astoria, which was said to have been designed "to provide exclusiveness for the masses." Delmonico's had moved from downtown to Fifth Avenue and 14th Street and was soon to pass beyond the Flatiron Building and stay for a time at Fifth Avenue and 25th Street. Before long (1904-05) Henry Ford would create a sensation by exhibiting his model T car at Wanamaker's; rich folk were already dashing around town in gas buggies, frightening hansom cab horses with their queer noises and amusing the populace in their linen dusters and goggles.

In 1916 A. E. Lefcourt built a thirteen-story loft building for the garment trades in West 33rd Street, but this was a white elephant for many years. The garment trade was not wanted in or near Fifth Avenue, but cheaper land was available between 6th and 7th Avenues in the Thirties. Saul Singer was the leader in building the vast Garment Center, where New York's greatest single industry is concentrated. Near by is the Fur Center, stimulated by the first war boom that popularized fur coats and silk shirts.

The Pennsylvania Station, started and completed during the first decade of the new century, was the dream and became the monument of Alexander Johnston Cassatt. He had entered the service of the Pennsylvania in 1861, a year after graduating from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and had risen to the vice-presidency by 1880, when he retired at the age of forty-two. Cassatt remained a director, and seventeen years later he was induced to become president of the Pennsylvania. He evolved the "community of interest" plan under which competing railroads secured a voice in management and rate making before the Elkins Anti-Rebate Law and later the Hepburn Act had strengthened the hands of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Cassatt conceived the Pennsylvania Station, with its tunnels under the Hudson and East rivers, yards in Long Island City, and a connection with New England via the Hell Gate Bridge, made possible by electric traction. Having fought a long battle with the New York Central and secured a franchise to enter New York City from New Jersey, Cassatt wanted his railroad to have a station that would more than match the Grand Central Terminal.

McKim, Mead & White were engaged to design the station. They based the huge waiting room on the Baths of Caracalla in Rome. The interior is done in travertine from quarries near Tivoli, Italy, from which stone was taken to build the Eternal City. The warm stone is polished by use. The exterior is pink granite from Milford, Massachusetts. Until the Second World War there were few occasions when the enormous station seemed crowded. Except for an ornamental clock and a statue of Cassatt by Adolph Alexander Weinman, the building is without decoration or embellishment.

Developments around the Pennsylvania Station differ considerably from those grouped about Grand Central. The Pennsylvania Hotel opposite, built in 1919, and the General Post Office in the rear are on a comparable scale. The McAlpin, Martinique, New Yorker, Lincoln, Governor Clinton, and other hotels, as well as Macy's, Gimbels, and Saks near by, are parts of the development that followed the construction of the Pennsylvania Station, the Hudson, and Manhattan tubes, and the subways reaching the area.

Public indignation, caused by the disastrous wreck in the Park Avenue tunnel in 1902, had led to the passage of a law prohibiting the use of steam locomotives on passenger trains in New York after July 1, 1910. The problem of electrifying the New York Central and the New York and New Haven line was given to William J. Wilgus, chief engineer of the New York Central, who had become its vice-president. The new Grand Central Station, which had cost \$5,000,000, was only a year old. Vanderbilt's railroad was doing well with its long-haul traffic, and the Century Limited was racing the Pennsylvania's Broadway Limited to Chicago; but commuter traffic was increasing and the Pennsylvania was preparing to come into New York with tunnels and electric power.

Wilgus was faced with a complicated set of problems unlike those of the Pennsylvania. He had to devise a real terminal in a limited space where land was extremely expensive. The general scheme of the present Grand Central was the solution that came to him "in a flash" after he had puzzled over the matter for some time. His concept of a vast underground terminal, with tracks at different levels, was daring, but it was promptly approved. Within eleven months after the wreck the engineering plans were ready, and by January, 1903, an architectural competition was announced. The competition closed on March 1, 1903. The general plan called for intensive use of the area above the railroad tracks to help pay for the costly improvement.

A number of leading architects entered the competition, including Daniel H. Burnham, Samuel Huckel, Jr., who had just completed the new City Hall in Philadelphia, and Stanford White. White proposed a 30-story tower straddling Park Avenue, with a jet of steam 300 feet high which would be red at night and serve as a beacon to ships at sea. The winners in the contest were Charles Reed and Allen Stem of St. Paul, Minnesota. They were practically

unknown in New York, but they were then building a station for the Central at Troy, and Reed was a brother-in-law of Wilgus.¹

There was considerable trouble over the architecture, and the details of the plans were changed from time to time. Wilgus resigned in 1907 and later became Director of Military Railways for Pershing in the First World War and chairman of the advisory board for the Detroit River Tunnel. Charles Reed, his brother-in-law, died. At about this time Whitney Warren, a cousin and close friend of William K. Vanderbilt, drew up an alternative plan, which was followed in part.

Whitney Warren, a cousin of Harry Payne Whitney as well as of Vanderbilt, was a forceful and dramatic figure. Warren and Wetmore (the partner was not an architect) did the Chelsea Piers and many other structures in New York. Warren restored the library at Louvain, destroyed by the Germans, and attracted international attention by defending the proposed inscription: "Destroyed by Teutonic madness, restored by American gift." A friend of Gabriele d'Annunzio and Mussolini, he urged the latter to attack Hitler in 1930.

The original plan was to connect Park and Fourth Avenues by an elevated highway around a 22-story hotel built on the roof of the tunnels. The city gave its approval on June 19, 1903, and the extensive demolition necessary started on July 1. The Grand Central Palace, used by the Merchants and Manufacturers Exchange, was spared and was used as a station while the work progressed and a new Palace was being built. The new Grand Central Terminal was thrown open to the public on February 3, 1913, but it was 1917 before the upper-level loop was used; the lower level loop was not opened until May 1, 1927.

Following Charles Reed's death and Warren's appointment as architect, Stem went to court and won an award of \$400,000 from Warren. Because of the controversy it is not easy to attribute all the specific individual features of the terminal to the architects who conceived them, but the use of ramps instead of stairs was in the original Reed-Stem plan and Warren is credited with the modern French interior.

Paul Helleu did the celestial ceiling, over which there was a lively dispute among astronomical authorities. Helleu is also well known for his portrait of the Duchess of Marlborough, Vanderbilt's daughter. Another American woman, Jenny Jerome, the daughter of Vanderbilt's broker and friend, married Randolph Churchill, so that it may be said that Grand Central is closely related to the British aristocracy.

The Biltmore Hotel, opened the same year as the new terminal, in 1913, was named for Bilt Manor, the town in Holland from which Jan Aulsen Van der Bilt came to Nieuw Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. The Commodore Hotel, given the name most commonly used in referring to Cornelius Vander-

¹ David Marshall, *Grand Central* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1946).

bilt, was not opened until 1919, a promising rival of the Pennsylvania Hotel, opened the same year. For a number of reasons the development in the Grand Central area was more extensive than that which took place around the Pennsylvania Station. The new Grand Central Palace, the Roosevelt, Chatham, Barclay, Marguery, Park Lane, Ritz Towers, Ambassador, and other hotels were also parts of the railroad and Park Avenue rehabilitation clustering around the new center.

Across the way from the terminal, the Belmont Hotel, which was later to give way to the American Airlines headquarters, the Yale Club, the Post Office, Vanderbilt Avenue, the Vanderbilt Concourse and the Postum buildings, and the New York Central's huge office structure, through which Park Avenue winds its way, are also parts of the development. So is the Graybar Building, a monument to Professor Elisha Gray and Amos Barton, pioneers in electric equipment, whose enterprise became the Western Electric Company.

On 42nd Street, diagonally across from the Chrysler, stands the Chanin Building, perpetuating the name of Irwin S. and Henry I. Chanin, who like Louis J. Horowitz came over from Brooklyn to change Manhattan's skyline during the Great Boom. The Chanins built their first one-story frame house in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn; after doing a few modest structures in downtown Brooklyn they moved over to Manhattan, where by 1929 they had erected one hundred buildings valued at \$80,000,000, including the Roxy, Strand, Little, and Century theaters. The Lincoln Building, with its fifty-three stories, was left unfinished when the collapse came in 1933.

Some of the other structures in the neighborhood broke records in construction. The Murray Hill Building, at Madison Avenue and 40th Street, with its twenty-nine stories, was built in eighty-one working days; the Paramount Theater Building was erected in less than a year. Raymond Hood, whose genius also found expression in Rockefeller Center, the Chicago *Tribune* Tower, and elsewhere, gave the area balance with his McGraw-Hill and *Daily News* buildings, west and east respectively.

Tudor City and the other structures of the Fred F. French Company dominated the east end, across the way from the United Nations site. Here the Fred F. French Company set a pattern for urban housing that was later followed in other parts of the city, but its lower East Side scheme, Knickerbocker Village, was completed as a limited dividend housing project after the depression began.

Closer to Times Square, 500 Fifth Avenue, opposite the Public Library, is hardly noticed from the street, yet its fifty-eight stories carry it up 699 feet. The *Herald*, founded in 1835, was the first of the great newspapers to move uptown. The *Times*, founded in 1851, followed in 1905. The other papers, however, remained in Park Row until 1910. When Frank Munsey invaded the newspaper field, the *Tribune*, which had moved uptown, absorbed the *Herald*. The old

Morning World and the *Press*, *Mail*, and *Globe* disappeared, and the *World-Telegram* came into being. This is now located on the lower West Side, along with the *Post*, founded by Alexander Hamilton. The *Sun*, Dana's old paper, which was started in 1832, remains in the old A. T. Stewart Building at Broadway and Chambers Street. Hearst's newspapers are housed on South Street on the lower East Side.

The American Radiator Building, another by Hood, and the Engineers Club, with the Engineering Societies Building in the rear, are best seen from across Bryant Park. The old Hippodrome, formerly on Sixth Avenue at 43rd Street, is gone, but on 44th Street the Harvard Club and New York Yacht Club buildings can be glimpsed facing the old Hippodrome site, and the Century Association is on 43rd Street with the Columbia University Club opposite. New Yorkers no longer boast of their opera house but they are still sentimental about the old "Met" at Broadway and 41st Street.

New York has had many notable builders and promoters, and the midtown area reflects their genius and enterprise. Otto Marc Eidlitz, August Heckscher, Alexander M. Bing, Adolph Zukor, Julius Miller, and others were creators of the modern city. But the man who probably did more than any other individual to create the New York skyline of today was Louis J. Horowitz, an immigrant boy who landed here in 1892 at the age of thirteen. He worked at a number of jobs, including that of clerk in a shoe store. In six years he had saved \$2,000 and in 1898, the year Greater New York was born, he bought a lot at 119 Clinton Avenue, in the fashionable Hill Section of Brooklyn, and built an eight-room apartment, which he sold at a profit.

Brooklyn Heights next attracted him and he erected a number of apartments and hotels in that section. Horowitz's success attracted the attention of Frank Bailey, head of the Brooklyn office of the Title Guarantee and Trust Company, who sent him over to Manhattan to see Clarence H. Kelsey, of the Title Company, who offered him the job of helping the Thompson-Starrett Company handle its finances. Only twenty-eight at the time, Horowitz quickly rose to the presidency of this construction company. During the period when Horowitz was in the Thompson-Starrett Company it constructed 462 buildings, valued at \$600,000,000, most of them in New York. They included such notable structures as the Equitable, Woolworth, Chrysler, Straus, and Equitable Trust buildings, Gimbel's store, the Paramount Theater, and the Rector (Claridge), the Ambassador, the McAlpin, and the new Waldorf-Astoria hotels. Every one of these buildings has an interesting human story and with similar accounts explain more clearly than most histories how New York as we know it was put together. The Empire State Building, designed by Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, was erected by Starrett Brothers and Eken. The latter, with Marc Eidlitz & Son,

the George A. Fuller Company and the Turner Construction Company, are among the leading master builders of the modern metropolis.

The Woolworth Building was the projection of an ambitious man who wanted to advertise his business. The Equitable Building scheme had a similar origin. Coleman du Pont had sold much of his stock in the powder company he had organized and had come to New York, where he was making more money and putting some of it into real estate. A fire had ravaged the building of the Equitable Life Assurance Company at 120 Broadway, and the Horowitz Company had cleared the site. Horowitz tried to get the insurance company to rebuild. At this stage an architect interested Du Pont in a scheme for putting up a gigantic building there. Horowitz argued against the grandiose plan but was induced to go into it when Du Pont gave him a block of stock and the job of managing the building as well as erecting it.

The Du Pont scheme aroused a storm of protest. The Equitable Building was to occupy an entire block on Broadway and was to rise forty stories high, shutting out the light and air of all the surrounding buildings and darkening the streets over a large area. There was no law to stop such a building, with its 1,200,000 square feet of space, and it became the largest office building in the world as well as the structure carrying the highest valuation of any in New York. It was designed by G. B. Graham.

Although there was no way to prevent the Equitable Building, its erection led to the movement to limit the height and bulk of buildings in New York, whose Zoning Regulations, adopted in 1916, were the first in the country and gave tremendous impetus to city planning generally. Horowitz's prediction that the big building would not pay proved to be wrong, at first. The demand for office space during the First World War was so great that the building readily found tenants. Subsequently it had to be reorganized, and controversy arose when the rent was raised on the Bankers' Club on the top floor. The building shortage during the Second World War again filled the gigantic building, which happens to have been the only New York structure damaged by shell fire in the global war. This occurred when an anti-aircraft gun on the waterfront was fired accidentally and a bullet struck the cornice of the Equitable.

Putting the mosaic of modern New York together was greatly accelerated by major transportation improvements. With the Hudson tubes holed through and the line reaching toward Herald Square, Gimbel Brothers were induced to build their store. The McAlpin Hotel across the way was projected, and Albert Herter began weaving the low-warp tapestries that were to tell the story of New York in the new hostelry's lobby.² McKim, Mead & White did the Imperial Hotel not far away. The Martinique, by Henry J. Hardenbergh, who also

² Helen W. Henderson, *A Loiterer in New York* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1917).

designed the old Waldorf-Astoria a block away, was part of this development.

Stanford White designed a Renaissance palace to house James Gordon Bennett's New York *Herald*. White was inspired by the Palazzo del Consiglio of Verona. The original loggia had statues of distinguished gentlemen of Verona on its façade; White substituted a row of blinking owls and added a figure of Minerva, by Antonio Jean Carles, and a bronze clock with Stuff and Guff hammering out the hours. For years the *Herald* pressmen gave free performances for Broadway crowds which stood before the huge windows, but there was not much space for a composing room under the owls on the eaves. Robert Moses put Stuff and Guff back on the job in 1931, and Horace Greeley still sits serene in the tiny park across 34th Street, but the *Herald* building is gone and the owls are in the School of Journalism at New York University.

One of Louis Horowitz's early deals for Thompson-Starrett was to sell a small plot on Madison Avenue and East 42nd Street at a profit of \$250,000, thus cashing in early on the boom that was to follow the Grand Central improvement. His last and in some ways the most dramatic of his many bold adventures was the new Waldorf-Astoria, which was to climax the building boom of the 1920's. Coleman du Pont, who had been one of the owners of the old Waldorf-Astoria and was heavily interested in the Empire State Building, planned to replace the hotel at a new location. Horowitz meanwhile decided that the old Waldorf-Astoria had stood for something that should not be allowed to die and, sure that he could get the necessary financial backing, started looking for a site.

Although the New York Central and Park Avenue area already had several large new hotels, the site of the railroad's electric power plant on Park Avenue between 49th and 50th Streets was selected. Horowitz convinced the railroad that the power plant there should be moved to a cheaper location. The value of the land on which ground rent was to be paid was fixed at \$12,000,000, and the New York Central agreed to lend \$10,000,000 more toward the cost of the building. Another \$11,000,000 was to be provided by the sale of bonds, and an additional \$7,000,000 was to be raised by selling stock.

Schulze and Weaver, hotel architects, made the plans, and work on the foundation was started on October 28, 1929. The big crash in Wall Street came on October 29. Horowitz says that the two events coincided so closely that some of his banker friends suggested that the dynamiting under Park Avenue had caused the crash in Wall Street. The New York Central was too deeply involved to stop its part of the work; the bankers lived up to their agreements—although no stock was sold—and the hotel was completed at the depth of the depression. The opening in 1931 was as pretentious as it could be made. The King of Siam, who while his eyes were being treated was staying at Mrs. Ogden Reid's place, Ophir Hall, was served the first meal.

With the tremendous increase in land values it became more and more diffi-

cult to assemble sufficient land to make comprehensive developments in Midtown. To assemble an entire block had been almost impossible for a quarter of a century. For this reason not only was Rockefeller Center a unique development in many ways, but no comparable private project would have been feasible.

Early in Nieuw Amsterdam's history, the West India Company set aside a tract of land on the lower West Side of Manhattan for a Company farm to serve its officers and employees. Later the farm of Annetje Jans was added. When the province was taken over by the English, this became successively the Duke of York's Farm, then the King's Farm. Later it was known as Queen's Farm until Queen Anne gave the land to Trinity Church and King's College.

King's College became Columbia College after the Revolution, and as lower Manhattan became more crowded it moved into what was then open country on Madison Avenue between 49th and 51st Streets. Land nearby was originally owned by the city, which was granted the common lands of Manhattan Island under the Dongan Charter, was sold to Dr. David Hosack in 1801 for \$4,807.36 cash and a quit rent of "16 bushels of good merchantable wheat to be paid every May 1, in kind, or its equivalent of good silver coin."

Dr. Hosack established the Elgin Botanical Gardens on the land and spent \$100,000 developing them. When his resources were exhausted, the legislature bought the land, paying Hosack \$30,000 less than his expenditures. Columbia came into possession of the land but was already planning to establish the University on Momingside Heights. Although hard pressed at times, the University held on to the land in Midtown and began to lease it for 21-year periods. Although the town grew up all around the land, it was a burden at times.

In 1925 Otto Kahn, an ardent lover of music and a generous patron of the arts, became the leader in a movement to provide New York with a new opera house in the boom period. He bought a lot on West 57th Street and engaged Benjamin Wistar Morris III to draw plans for an opera house on the site. There was a controversy inside the opera company, and Mr. Kahn's site and plans were rejected. This did not end the matter, however. There was a genuine need for a new opera house, and enterprising real estate brokers continued to try to develop a scheme that would be acceptable to those interested in the project. With such a purpose in mind representatives of William A. White & Sons, real estate brokers, asked John D. Rockefeller, Jr., if he would be willing to lease about three blocks of the property owned by Columbia University and improve it with low buildings to provide a proper background for a proposed opera house.

That was the beginning of Rockefeller Center. As the opera scheme evaporated at the approach of the depression, the plans for Radio City and Rockefeller Center expanded. Reinhard & Hofmeister, Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray, and Hood & Foulhoux were engaged as architects. Conforming to the existing

zoning regulations, the dominant R.C.A. Building was made practical and the entire development was made spacious by the formation of a new private street and the arrangement of lower buildings on the periphery, with open spaces in the center. Rockefeller Center not only created a new pattern for urban development on a larger scale than ever before but also provided facilities for serving the entire group of buildings by underground roadways and a large parking garage. Thus, despite the concentration of activities, there is less evidence of surface congestion in the vicinity.

The Museum of Modern Art, the new Best store, and other projects were attracted to the area by the Rockefeller development and the removal of the old elevated from Sixth Avenue, which became the Avenue of the Americas in 1946. The old Plaza Hotel, the Metropolitan Club, the Savoy Plaza and Sherry Netherlands hotels, and the development of new luxury hotels, apartments, and other structures around Central Park was accelerated during the Great Boom.

On the East Side, River House and the Pan-Hellenic (Beekman Towers) stand out. As the eye travels up Manhattan Island the architectural parade is climaxed by the old Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Planetarium, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Columbia University buildings, the Riverside Church, the Hispanic Museum, and the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, with The Cloisters in Tryon Park and the fifteen-mile backdrop of green on the Palisades across the river providing a quiet benediction on the whole array.

The larger panorama, which takes in George Washington Bridge and Castle Village, extends to The Bronx, where Fordham University's mammoth old buildings and the Hall of Fame of New York University dominate the upper view. The mass of apartments and woods block out such developments as Fieldstone and Riverdale, but the Parkchester apartment group in the East Bronx carries the eye on to the beautiful Bronx-Whitestone Bridge and over to Long Island. Factories around the waterfront obscure the residential developments that distinguish Queens, which lacks notable public buildings. The Brooklyn Museum, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, the Telephone Building, and the Court Street buildings top Brooklyn's skyline, with the Fort Greene, Red Hook, and other public housing projects emerging from the mass of structures.

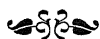
In the end the eye is held longest by the rippling waters, the great bridges, and the parkways and by Rockefeller Center and the Empire State tower, which are in scale with and proclaim the new city. These features all look to the future and make a new kind of community inevitable.

Views of New York from its towers naturally overlook some of the finer buildings that stay close to the ground. The New York Public Library, by Carrère & Hastings, and others with ground around them stand out, but such ar-

chitectural gems as the Morgan Library, perhaps McKim's masterpiece, must be seen from the surface or from inside. Yet it is possible, by sweeping the horizon, to get from the tallest tower in town glimpses that help tell the story of how Greater New York was put together, just as the view from Brooklyn Bridge aids in comprehending New York's beginnings.

Part Six: » INTEGRATING
THE GREATER CITY

Chapter Twenty-Six



A Paul Bunyan Comes to Town

THE man who today has done most to transform Greater New York—to give it form and unity, provide amenities, and create new designs for urban living—is Robert Moses. This prodigious public official is a latter-day Paul Bunyan come to town, uprooting, demolishing, clearing, reshaping, rebuilding, refurbishing, and integrating the most crowded, chaotic conurbation on earth. It would be impossible accurately to describe the physical development of New York during the past twenty-five years without almost continuous references to Robert Moses. But merely to list his achievements gives no clue to the complex forces he has mastered and keeps in motion. His influence reaches into almost every phase of public administration.¹

Moses is such a fast worker that no one can keep up with him. Some years ago, when he vigorously assailed a Commissioner of Sanitation for placing garbage cans beside a park, the latter's rejoinder was that he had no way of knowing when garbage cans were placed at night that Mr. Moses would have created a park alongside them in the morning. New Yorkers cannot keep abreast of Moses's finished work, to say nothing of his current activities or future plans. Only by the use of detailed progress charts can the busy Commissioner keep track of work under way, and after a project is launched he is too busy starting others to spend much time on it.

An adequate biography of Robert Moses would be an unusually absorbing success story about a striking personality. His increasing battles to advance projects and measures to which he is committed would provide plenty of drama; an account of his achievements in many fields would make a bulky volume, and even a summary of his controversies would be an exacting task. He is not a paragon and his frequent eruptions are often violent, but they are not about

¹ Cleveland Rodgers, "Robert Moses, an Atlantic Portrait," *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1939.

trivial matters. A thorough analytical study of Moses's career would be a profound treatise and a revealing commentary on the theory and practices of democratic government. It would show what happens before and after constitutions, charters, and laws are passed.

Many persons, unwilling to believe in the miraculous, are still mystified by Moses's ability to get things done. One key to this mystery is that he personally drafted the laws creating his many official positions and others relating to his work. Paul Windels, the former Corporation Counsel, once said that Moses's methods were "untainted by legality." Nevertheless, the first tool Moses reaches for when he tackles an unsolved problem is apt to be a pencil to scratch off a new statute. It is an old habit. Al Smith once declared that "Bob" Moses was "the best bill drafter we ever had at Albany."

Robert Moses's father was Emanuel Moses, of Spanish-Jewish (unorthodox) extraction, who was a successful department store owner in New Haven, Connecticut, where Robert was born on December 18, 1888. His mother was the daughter of Bernard Cohen, a prosperous New York merchant and a Commissioner of Education under William L. Strong, the last Republican Mayor of New York before the consolidation. Bernard Cohen bequeathed his home to his daughter, and the Moses family came to New York to live in 1897.

At Yale, Robert Moses went in for running and was on the freshman and varsity swimming teams. He wrote for the *Yale Courant* and fought successfully to get a share of the football money for the paper's operation. He helped edit a volume of Yale verse, experimented with poetry, served as president of the Kit-Kat Club, and was elected to the Senior Council, which he helped to organize.

In 1915 Moses married Mary Louise Sims, of Dodgeville, Wisconsin, granddaughter of the Reverend George Sims, a Methodist circuit rider. Mrs. Moses grew up under the progressive political philosophy of Robert M. LaFollette and served as secretary to Governor F. E. McGovern before coming to New York to join the staff of the Bureau of Municipal Research, where she and Robert Moses met. They have two married daughters and live in an apartment on the upper East Side overlooking the East River and the Triborough Bridge. They also have a summer place at Babylon, Long Island.

Although he is a Yale graduate and received his B.A. degree with honors in jurisprudence, an M.A. from Wadham College, Oxford, and a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science at Columbia, there is nothing academic about Bob Moses. He had a well developed philosophy of democratic government and administration before he entered public service.

At Oxford Moses was selected to represent his college at a world congress on racial problems. There his outspokenness so infuriated some of the intense nationalists that he had to escape from the platform through a rear exit. But

one of the delegates, an assistant to the Khedive of Egypt, was so impressed that he offered Moses a job as secretary to the Khedive. The offer was declined, but later Moses and a classmate visited Egypt to study what was being done there under Kitchener. En route from Marseilles the crew of the French ship on which they sailed mutinied, and it was not until some British Colonial officers on board took a hand that the trouble was ended. Moses developed such an admiration for the British Colonial Administration that he started a book, "The Civil Service of Great Britain," which he completed as his thesis for his doctor's degree at Columbia.

While at Columbia Moses became a volunteer worker for the Bureau of Municipal Research and worked with the Mitchel Administration on budgetary matters until we entered the First World War. During the war he spent a short time as superintendent of production and assistant manager of the Emergency Fleet Corporation at Hog Island, but his open contempt for red tape and inefficiency led to a row and he resigned.

Five days before the Armistice in 1918, Alfred E. Smith was elected Governor and promptly named an unofficial, bipartisan Reconstruction Commission to deal with problems left by the war. Moses, as chief of staff of the Committee on Retrenchment and Reorganization, prepared the commission's report. This was the beginning of far-reaching reforms, not only in the state but in the city and in the nation. It marked the start in the reorganizing of the state government along the lines proposed in the state constitution of 1915, which had been defeated at the polls.

When Smith was re-elected in 1922, Moses moved into the executive offices at Albany along with him. Moses wrote all the reorganization bills and was appointed Secretary of State in 1927, an office that became a catch-all for the bureaus left over in the reorganization. When Smith was defeated for the Presidency and Roosevelt became Governor, Smith made a special trip to Hyde Park to request Roosevelt to reappoint Moses Secretary of State. Roosevelt's refusal was said to have been based in part on Moses's action in refusing to appoint Louis M. Howe, Roosevelt's secretary, to a sinecure in the Council of Parks.

Before 1924 there were some forty parks and places of historic interest scattered throughout New York State, with as many administrative bodies. Moses drew up a State Park Plan proposing a unified system and a bond issue of \$15,000,000 with which to expand and rehabilitate the parks and build highways to make them accessible. With Governor Smith's support the bond issue was voted in 1923, and in 1924 eleven regional commissions were created under a Council of Parks, with Robert Moses as chairman. He was also made president of the Long Island State Park Commission.

Mr. Moses promoted and co-ordinated the work of the various commissions

throughout the state, creating a vast chain of upwards of a hundred public parks, linking many of them with parkways, and giving New York State a park system that became a model for the country. His special interest, however, was Long Island, and it was his creation of Jones Beach that first brought him wide acclaim.

When Moses began work on Long Island the only state park in the area was on Fire Island, a sand bar reached only by boat. Before Hitler invaded Poland there were thirteen splendid parks, totaling 10,631 acres and stretching from the New York City line to Montauk Point; these, with the connecting parkways, cost more than \$50,000,000.

Greater New York is not in the state regional park system as such, but in 1928 Mr. Moses organized the Metropolitan Conference on Parks and developed a plan for co-ordinating the city and state parks and parkways and other recreational facilities. As one result of this movement the city acquired most of the few remaining wooded areas in Queens and Richmond, and by 1930 Mr. Moses had begun to extend the Long Island parkways into the city.

When large sums were made available to fight the depression, Moses was one of the few officials in the country who was ready with definite plans to put men to work. As chairman of Governor Lehman's Emergency Public Works Commission in 1933, he quickly developed a program for New York State, including such projects as the Saratoga Springs Authority and the Catskill Bridge Authority, to provide a new Hudson River Crossing; the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority, which constructed the International Bridge to Canada, opened in August 1938; and the Jones Beach State Parkway and Bethpage Park authorities on Long Island.

Projects in New York City secured through this State Commission included the Triborough Bridge, Knickerbocker Village and Hillside—the first housing projects to receive Federal aid—and the Hayden Planetarium. The New York Parkway Authority was created to construct the Henry Hudson Bridge and Parkway, and it later built the Marine Parkway and Crossbay bridges to the Rockaway peninsula. Mr. Moses became head of the Triborough Bridge and New York Parkway authorities as well as the special Long Island agencies.

The ingenious corporate device known as an "authority" was modeled after the Port of New York Authority, which took its form and name from the Port of London Authority. Such authorities provide a method of financing and operating public utilities which meets objections both to public and to strictly private ownership. They are generally self-sustaining and self-liquidating, and with certain governmental aids they are supported by those who use them.

When F. H. LaGuardia was elected Mayor in 1933 he asked Mr. Moses to join his administration. Moses agreed on condition that a single unified city Department of Parks be set up and that he be permitted to retain his state posi-

tions and go on with the work of co-ordinating the city and state programs for parks, parkways, and recreational facilities. Special legislation was passed to permit this merging of functions, and this gave Mr. Moses a unique status as a city-state official.

All this was worked out before LaGuardia took office. The country was in the midst of the depression, and the Federal government began making huge funds available to put men to work. By January, 1934, Moses had written out on a single piece of paper a four-year program for the city parks. The details, later developed, called for 1,700 work relief projects providing employment for 75,000 men. This was the beginning of the remarkable transformation of the city parks which soon became apparent. In his report in 1945, *Twelve Years of Park Progress*, Mr. Moses revealed that in addition to the new zoos and other improvements in old parks the number of playgrounds had been increased from 119 to 492. The list of new parks and playgrounds has since been steadily enlarged.

During the period of prodigious public spending under the New Deal Administration, to which he was opposed and to whose leaders he was suspect, Mr. Moses emerged as the most farsighted and constructive of public spenders. Some half a billion dollars was used to create new city parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, and other recreational facilities; large new areas were acquired around lakes, along streams, and at the seashore. Parkways, with their shoestring and ribbon parks alongside, were brought closer to the heart of the city.

One of Moses's most complex tasks was the West Side Improvement, which had been demanded for at least thirty years. This involved covering the railroad tracks along Riverside Drive and building the magnificent parkway extending from the West Side Highway to Westchester by way of the Henry Hudson Bridge. Tracks were also removed from the streets in lower Manhattan.

Mr. Moses helped to complete Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive along the East River and to connect it with the Triborough Bridge, built the beautiful Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, and developed parkways and other parts of the arterial highway system described in more detail in the next chapter. Other special tasks successfully performed included the program for railroad grade separations which have virtually eliminated crossing hazards in Greater New York. The most important of these projects involved putting the Atlantic Avenue tracks of the Long Island Rail Road in a tunnel and elevating the tracks in the Rockaways.

There is a striking parallel between the evolution of private and public institutions in New York. Under strong leadership, finance, industry, and business have been merged to secure greater efficiency and to facilitate expansion. Government in New York has followed the same course. The City Charter adopted in 1936, like the state reorganization under Governor Smith, centralized admin-

istrative powers and consolidated related functions. This process was carried further under LaGuardia and Mayor O'Dwyer, and Commissioner Moses was given greater scope.

By degrees various authorities headed by Moses were merged. The Triborough Bridge Authority absorbed the New York City Tunnel Authority, thus making Mr. Moses responsible also for the Queens Midtown Vehicular Tunnel and the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. These three are the only toll facilities operating wholly within the city. Meantime, in November, 1941, Mayor LaGuardia appointed Mr. Moses a member of the City Planning Commission and he was also made chairman of its Committee on Arterial Highways and Housing. In his various capacities Mr. Moses worked out the details of the Federal-State arterial program which was incorporated into law.

Mr. Moses's interest in housing was slow in developing, but once it had been aroused he attacked the problem with his characteristic vigor, imagination, and resourcefulness. As a result of his efforts, New York's re-housing program, including public as well as private projects, received tremendous impetus. Federal funds for public housing had been fully allocated when Mr. Moses gave his support to the demand that New York State take the lead in providing subsidized housing. He was instrumental in effecting constitutional amendments under which the state could enter this field and in securing enabling legislation. He also helped to draft legislation under which insurance companies are permitted to construct and operate housing developments with and without government aid.

As the representative of Mayor LaGuardia, Moses was instrumental in getting the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to undertake the Stuyvesant Town, Peter Cooper Village, and Riverton housing developments, and he later induced lending institutions to undertake Parkway Village, Fresh Meadow, and other projects. He also participated in the program for emergency housing for veterans, the rehabilitation of old dwellings, the relocation of tenants affected by new housing, and the integration of housing and other improvements.

Commissioner Moses was active in developing the city airports, and he set up the City Airport Authority which was superseded when the Port Authority took over the operation of the municipal airports in 1947. As Park Commissioner, Mr. Moses is a member ex-officio of such public institutions as museums, libraries, zoos, and botanical gardens. As City Co-ordinator of Construction he is involved in almost every physical betterment in the city.

Mr. Moses is neither dynamic nor dramatic in the ordinary sense. Most of the time he seems a mild-mannered, amiable, persuasive man earnestly trying to explain his plans and ideas. But, when such methods fail and he encounters opposition, his manner abruptly changes into that of a fighter. He is ruthless in dealing with self-seekers, obstructionists, and "crackpots," and he strikes out at

friends and foes alike. He contradicts opponents, telling them flatly they don't know what they are talking about, and either overwhelms them with facts or flattens them with sarcasm and ridicule. Moses has made some lasting enemies, but his feuds seldom last long and he probably has more former antagonists among his friends than any man in public life.

Over six feet tall, Moses sets his 185 pounds into motion by hunching his shoulders, broadened by swimming. He has a firm jaw, a long straight "executive" nose, a generous mouth, and a broad, ever-ready smile showing his strong, white teeth in striking contrast to the smooth, olive-tinted skin, somber eyes, and black eyebrows. His hands are large, but his tapering fingers suggest those of a sculptor. At times he creates the impression that he is a frustrated artist, his restless energy driving him from one big task to another as compensation for a failure to express his genius in more satisfying ways.

The Commissioner is a busy man and he works hard. His workshop in the State Building at 80 Centre Street typifies his unique status as a city-state official. Actually he has several sub-centers. One is the Arsenal in Central Park, where park activities are concentrated. Another is the attractive modern administrative building hidden beneath the Triborough Bridge on Randall's Island, where every vehicle passing the toll booths overhead is mechanically reported. Still another Moses administrative center is at the office of the New York State Park Commission, in a beautifully transformed building at Babylon, Long Island. All these offices are connected by teletype machines, but Mr. Moses works anywhere, any time—at his apartment in Manhattan, in his home in Babylon, in the Mayor's house, the Gracie Mansion, or riding with the Mayor, or on his frequent field trips. In his office, Mr. Moses does most of his work standing, walking around, or sitting on desks or tables. Sometimes he even sits at his own desk for short periods. Important conferences on a great variety of matters, involving persons in many fields, are often merged and continued through informal luncheons at the big table around the corner from the Commissioner's desk.

Mr. Moses's first deputy on the City Planning Commission was George E. Spargo, who later served as deputy mayor and is manager of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. He was succeeded on the Commission by Arthur S. Hodgkiss, executive officer of the Department of Parks. Men closely associated with Mr. Moses in his various activities include Gilmore D. Clarke, landscape architect, whose work on the Westside Improvement, Henry Hudson Parkway, Bryant Park and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Civic Centers was outstanding; Aymar Embury II, who designed the building in Flushing Meadow Park used by the United Nations; W. Earle Andrews, whose work at Jones Beach and on city parks was notable; Othmar Hermann Amman, designer of

the George Washington and Bronx-Whitestone bridges, and the firm of Madigan & Hyland, engineers.

Moses has an able and devoted staff of experts in the various agencies he heads, and he uses them as a team on any job that comes along. He works his men hard but finds ways of showing his appreciation; one is by giving them his full confidence. Through his long service and his superior staff he is better informed concerning other city departments and public agencies than most of the officials who head them for relatively short periods.

All this, however, does not fully explain Commissioner Moses's achievements or his special status as a public servant. The only salary he draws is that of Park Commissioner (\$15,000 a year), and he has never held an elective office. He was offered the Fusion nomination for Mayor in 1933 but declined it because of the opposition of Samuel Seabury, who had exposed Tammany corruption and did not like Moses's close relations with Alfred E. Smith.

Moses cast his first vote for Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 and has since been a nominal Republican, but he has always made a sharp distinction between Tammany Hall and Al Smith, whom he supported in 1928. In 1934 Moses took the Republican nomination for Governor, in opposition to Herbert H. Lehman. It was a hopeless campaign from the start, with both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Smith backing Lehman, but Moses turned it into a bitter fight.

When Moses was attacked as the candidate of the reactionary G.O.P. "Old Guard," he retaliated by linking Lehman with the Lehman Banking firm. Lehman refused to be drawn into debate, and Moses became more violent in his personal attacks. Moses otherwise distressed his political advisers by espousing a state sales tax and other unpopular measures. He was a new kind of candidate. It was difficult to get him to pose for photographs, and when a leading financier came to see him, at a time when campaign contributions were badly needed, he merely shook hands and asked, "How is your wife?"

Moses took his defeat philosophically and went back to work the next day. He was soon working closely with Governor Lehman, and Lehman Brothers handled the financing of the Moses City Parkway Authority in 1938. (The Moses and Lehman families lived in the same block in New York and the families grew up together.)

Not all of Moses's quarrels ended so happily. As Governor, Franklin D. Roosevelt acquiesced in Acting Governor Lehman's appointment of Moses as Moreland Commissioner to investigate the failure of the City Trust Company in 1929. As a result of this inquiry the Superintendent of Banks went to jail. Moses made recommendations for reforms which were disregarded by the Legislature with dire consequences. The failure of the Bank of the United States, with \$200,000,000 liabilities owed to 400,000 depositors, followed almost immediately. Roosevelt, however, never made direct use of Moses's extraordinary

abilities, although Moses directed much of the New Deal spending in and around New York.

After Moses's campaign against Lehman, efforts were made to have him removed from his state and city jobs, including his chairmanship of the Triborough Bridge Authority. Secretary Harold Ickes issued the celebrated Order No. 129 decreeing that Federal funds be withheld from agencies administered by persons holding municipal positions. This order aroused such public protest that it was withdrawn, and at the opening of Triborough Bridge in 1939 Moses publicly rebuked Roosevelt and Ickes, in their presence, by alluding to Samuel Johnson's sarcastic letter to Lord Chesterton spurning his lordship's patronizing praise of Johnson's dictionary after having snubbed the author when he needed help.

One explanation of Moses's success is to be found in this episode. As a rule politicians do not trust each other, and the public does not trust them. Moses is not a politician and probably could not, even though again nominated, be elected to office. But the public, as represented by the press and by people of influence and judgment, has more confidence in Moses than in the usual elected official. The politicians sense this, and most of them realize that they need him more than he needs them.

LaGuardia and Moses, despite their many differences, culminating in bitter attacks on Moses by LaGuardia after he left office, worked closely together and share credit for the tremendous improvements in New York during that period. During LaGuardia's illness in 1947, Moses substituted for him on the radio and they buried the hatchet—in the neck of Councilman Isaacs, with whom they were then in controversy over housing.

Stanley M. Isaacs is one of the ablest of a group of civic-minded New Yorkers who had become critical of Moses's attitude toward housing and city planning generally. These critics complain that Moses is dictatorial, a piecemeal planner, overly conservative, and lacking in vision. Moses calls such people "nuisances," "crack pots," and "pinks." The real conflict is between theory and practice—perfection versus the practical—advocacy of things as they should be against a realistic approach to things that can be.

William O'Dwyer, on becoming a candidate for Mayor in 1945, asked Mr. Moses to work with him if he were elected. Moses frankly told O'Dwyer that he intended to vote for Newbold Morris, and he did publicly support Morris. Nevertheless, Moses became a close adviser to the Democratic Mayor after the election, and when O'Dwyer took office Moses was appointed City-Construction Co-ordinator, a new position and title which gave him more influence than before in the city government.

In some way Moses manages to find time to do considerable pungent private writing on a variety of subjects. Among other things he is allergic to modern

art and to functionalism in architecture, but he is equally critical of some of the atrocious statuary in the city parks which is conventionalism at its worst. Mr. Moses is a cousin by marriage of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the lively clashes between Bob and Cousin Frank are diverting. The latter's hostility toward large cities, and New York in particular, gives Moses plenty of opportunities for exercising his genius for invective.

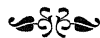
As the Mayor's representative, Commissioner Moses was largely responsible for providing temporary headquarters for the United Nations in Flushing Meadow and in persuading the organization to stay in New York. Later Moses conducted the negotiations and worked out the details for the permanent site of the United Nations in Manhattan. He was also responsible for the city's plans for improvements around the site. In the course of these negotiations Mr. Moses had an opportunity to pay his respects to Le Corbusier and other critics of the United Nations Assembly's decision to locate in New York.

Robert Moses has attained national recognition as an authority in many fields related to the planning and execution of public works and the legal, technical, and administrative problems of government. During the war he made studies and recommendations regarding several critical areas where production was handicapped by lack of adequate facilities. He has been consultant to Portland, Oregon; Pittsburgh, Baltimore, New Orleans, and other cities, as well as the Federal and state governments.

In July, 1947, he was invited by General Lucius D. Clay, United States Military Governor of the American Zone in Germany, to make a study of the basic problems of rehabilitating the devastated enemy cities, including housing and the increasing of coal production in the Ruhr. Moses made a flying trip to Germany and promptly presented a report with recommendations. However, because some of his frank statements might be considered too critical of British policy, the report was not made public for several months.

Robert Moses's career, unique in so many ways, is also typical of New York. It recalls other outstanding men, such as Andrew H. Green, and follows a familiar formula governing the forces that operate in the metropolis. Under this unwritten law, men and institutions strive continually to produce unity in the midst of multiplicity and to make possible the orderly advance of the community.

Chapter Twenty=Seven



Giving the City Form and Unity

CITIES derive form and unity from highways. Greater New York attained political unity in 1898, but half a century elapsed before its far-flung communities were linked by an adequate arterial highway system, including bridges, viaducts, vehicular tunnels, and other traffic facilities.

Some important gaps remain, but a new kind of city has been slowly emerging—one that is becoming more attractive, healthful, and convenient, a more comfortable place in which to live, work, and play, and a more interesting city to visit. It is a new kind of city because it possesses features and advantages never before enjoyed by a large community. One of these is greater freedom of movement—even for automobiles, despite the tremendous increase in their use.

It was a formidable task to “street” the wide waters that separate Brooklyn, Queens, and Richmond from each other and from Manhattan and to connect all parts of the city and region. Rapid transit—elevated railroads, commuter railroads, and subways—had scattered population over the immense area, and skyscrapers had further concentrated activities in Manhattan before the advent of automobiles. A city originally based on water transportation had to be remade to accommodate high-speed rubber-wheeled vehicles.

The street systems of Manhattan and the older sections of the other boroughs were designed to facilitate developments on small plots of land. Andrew H. Green did not foresee the automobile, but he early realized the possibilities in other forms of transportation. He not only created Central Park, laid out much of upper Manhattan, and extended streets over the Harlem River but also urged more bridges over the East River and the Hudson and constantly agitated for more parks. Men associated with him in drafting the Greater New York Charter shared his vision and worked toward the same ends.

In Brooklyn, James Samuel Thomas Stranahan (1808-98), who made his money as an engineer in railroad construction, founded the Brooklyn *Union*

newspaper and was appointed president of the Brooklyn Park Commission in 1860, a position he held for twenty years. MacMonnies's statue of Stranahan in Prospect Park commemorates his leadership in securing the services of Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in creating Prospect Park, the Eastern Parkway, the Ocean Parkway, and the Shore Drive, which provided the framework for Brooklyn's later park and parkway development. Stranahan was also a director of the Brooklyn Bridge project.

Henry Cruse Murphy (1810-82), president of the Brooklyn Bridge trustees, was another Brooklyn leader who helped shape that borough and thus contributed to Greater New York. Murphy was born in Brooklyn, studied law, and was a prominent Democratic political leader. He served in Congress, in the State Senate, and as Mayor in 1842-43. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate and for Governor and was defeated by one vote as a candidate for nomination as Vice-President with Franklin Pierce in 1852. While minister to the Netherlands in 1857-61, Mr. Murphy translated several important works in Dutch relating to Henry Hudson, Verrazzano, and the New Netherland. He started the Brooklyn *Eagle* in 1841, and as president of the Flatbush and Coney Island Railroad and the Brighton Beach Hotel, he helped develop Coney Island and Brighton Beach.

The city of today—and that of tomorrow—had its beginnings in the work of these and other men who built as well as they knew and better. Some improvements, notably those initiated during the Tweed regime, were motivated by greed and accompanied by graft and corruption, but many other betterments remain, though the men who were responsible for them, good and bad, are forgotten.

Even the notorious Fernando Wood made certain contributions; Abrams S. Hewitt made many more. Mayor Strong, the last Republican Mayor of New York before the consolidation, inaugurated many highway improvements in Manhattan, and Seth Low expanded them. Mayor McClellan's City Improvement Commission of 1903 submitted the first comprehensive plan for Greater New York, including new traffic arteries within and between the boroughs, a unified park system for each borough, the reservation or recovery of portions of the waterfront for recreational purposes, improvement of the harbor by constructing modern piers, the broadening of streets and avenues, and the removal of encroachments.

Unfortunately the recommendations in this report received little official support during the McClellan administration. The Gaynor regime that followed, however, brought George McAneny into the field of city planning. As President of the Board of Aldermen, and later as Borough President of Manhattan, McAneny assumed leadership in the movement that was to make the most notable contributions to the physical planning of the metropolis.

As chairman of the Committee on the City Plan, Mr. McAneny appointed a group of citizens, headed by Charles Dyer Norton, to advise on planning problems. This group included Edward M. Bassett, who in 1913 headed the Commission on the Height of Buildings which drafted the city's first Zoning Resolution, adopted in 1916. As official action lagged, this citizen's group,¹ under the leadership of Mr. Norton, became more active.

Charles Dyer Norton came to New York from Chicago, where he had been inspired by Daniel H. Burnham and the Chicago Plan, which grew out of the Chicago Exposition of 1893. Mr. Norton believed with Burnham that the only way to overcome official inertia and stir public enthusiasm was by developing a plan on a scale that would capture the imagination and compel action.

Mr. Norton was a trustee of the Russell Sage Foundation, and it was the wish of Mrs. Sage that at least a quarter of the income of the Foundation "be applied exclusively to the benefit of the City of New York and its vicinity." Mr. Norton and the other trustees agreed that no better way could be found to benefit the city and vicinity than by developing a plan for the entire metropolitan region. Accordingly \$1,000,000 was allocated for this purpose, and a Committee was named to carry out the project. The original group consisted of Mr. Norton as chairman, Robert W. de Forest, John M. Stern, Dwight W. Morrow, and Frederic A. Delano, the uncle of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Frank L. Polk, Frederic B. Pratt, Lawson Purdy, John H. Finley, George McAneny, and Henry James subsequently became members, and Mr. Delano was made chairman after the death of Mr. Norton in 1922.

The committee was organized in 1921, and Nelson P. Lewis, former Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, who had helped to develop the McClellan plan of 1903, directed the physical survey. Thomas Adams, of London, later became general director, and Lawrence M. Orton, now a member of the New York City Planning Commission, became secretary.

The Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs was inaugurated in 1922, and the Surveys and Plan were completed and published in 1929. This was the most comprehensive plan of its kind ever made. It covered twenty-two metropolitan counties in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut and integrated all the important facilities and activities in the region.

For the first time the metropolitan area was analyzed, its resources and needs appraised, and plans proposed to unify the entire region. There was nothing official about the plan, and its execution depended on acceptance by the public and the elected officials. To advance the Plan and keep the studies up to date, the Regional Plan Association was formed, with George McAneny as president.

¹ R. L. Duffus, *Mastering a Metropolis* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1930).

Mr. McAneny became chairman and Paul Windels president, in 1945; McKim Norton, the son of Charles D. Norton, is executive vice-president.

Some progress was made on the Regional Plan proposals between 1922 and 1929, but it was slow, and many improvements were undertaken without reference to the still unofficial plan. But as a result of the Regional Plan interest in planning was increased and a better understanding of the needs of the city and the surrounding area was created.

Development of the Regional Plan and the work of Robert Moses on parks and other projects started at about the same time and progressed simultaneously. Commissioner Moses has never claimed that he originated the various projects he brought to completion. Some of them were included in the Regional Plan, but he did not follow any general scheme worked out in advance.

The Moses method is to try for limited objectives and to take up and advance projects that are practical and concerning which there is general agreement as well as available funds. In this way he seeks to avoid the pitfalls inherent in sticking too rigidly to over-all plans no matter how desirable. Timing is also an important factor in the Moses calculations. His projects, in their initial stages, are sufficiently specific to be understood but not too rigid to prevent adjustments and compromises when obstacles are encountered.

The Southern Parkway, on Long Island, was necessary to reach Jones Beach. The Northern State Parkway was originally conceived as a boulevard to Oyster Bay as a memorial to Theodore Roosevelt. When it came to building the parkway the plan was opposed by certain estate owners, and it was necessary to change the route. Both of these parkways stopped at the city line. The state and Nassau County were induced to provide thoroughfares that would take the traffic from the city highways. When the parkways were constructed it was necessary to improve the connections inside the city.

The Triborough Bridge was conceived merely as a link between Upper Manhattan and Queens. By the time the parkways were being brought into the city it was obvious that connections were needed with the new bridge. There were no adequate connections between Brooklyn and Queens, although through the cemeteries there was an unfinished roadway, which became the Interborough Parkway. In Manhattan, the West Side Express Highway lacked a northern extension, as did the proposed East River Drive. Farther to the north connections were needed with Westchester, where parkways were first constructed. Throughout the region similar conditions prevailed, with many vital gaps between the existing highways.

Step by step these gaps are being closed. On January 22, 1941, the City Planning Commission adopted a Master Plan of Express Highways, Parkways, and Major Streets. This plan has since been modified from time to time, and the Master Plan of Arterial Highways and Major Streets as revised and adopted

on April 11, 1945, presents a plan that will provide the highway pattern for many years to come. The Master Plan does not merely show desirable routes. In addition to existing parkways, expressways, and major streets it includes extensions and important arteries for which funds are available and which were either under construction or had reached an advanced planning stage by 1948.

This arterial highway system will give New York a freedom of movement unknown in any large community since the advent of the automobile, and it will put every section of the city within easy access of expressways or parkways linked with the larger city-wide and regional systems.

Parkways and expressways not only permit motorists to move about quickly but also determine where and how people are to live; they multiply choices as to locations of homes and places of business and, by taking through traffic off ordinary streets, make possible the restoration of old residential sections and the proper development of new neighborhoods. In addition, they permit the creation of super blocks and the building of larger residential units free from the hazards, noise, and other adverse effects of busy thoroughfares.

As developed by Commissioner Moses, these parkways are generally regarded as models of beauty and utility. Not only do the ribbon parks provide ideal motoring but, curving gracefully through wooded areas and along the shores of rivers, bays, and lakes, they also offer unlimited opportunities for playgrounds, sitting parks, larger athletic fields, swimming pools, bridle paths, bicycle paths, handball courts, tennis courts, golf courses, and other recreational facilities, in addition to landscaped vistas and other amenities.

New York has better facilities for getting over and under the rivers than for moving on the surface, especially in Manhattan. In all there are some thirty-nine bridges and tunnels in and out of Manhattan. These include the six great East River bridges and the George Washington Bridge over the Hudson, as well as the Holland, Lincoln, Queens Midtown, and Brooklyn-Battery tunnels and the crossings of the Harlem River. All of the vehicular bridges and tunnels are vital links in the arterial system.

Although this system is city-wide and is integrated with the main regional highways, the various parts serve special purposes. The main Belt Highway completely encircles Greater New York. The Bronx River and Cross County parkways in The Bronx, feeding into the Hudson River Parkway, bring motorists down to the West Side (Miller) Expressway in Manhattan. The West Side Highway carries motorists to the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, which leads via the Gowanus Parkway to the Belt Parkway around Brooklyn and Queens and to the Whitestone Bridge and the Hutchinson River Parkway in The Bronx. This outer loop provides an express route over one hundred miles in length around Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx.

The Narrows Crossing, as shown on the Master Plan, will carry traffic from

Brooklyn to parkways and expressways on Staten Island which will connect with the Bayonne and Goethals bridges and the Outerbridge Crossing. In The Bronx, the Bronx River, the Bronx, Pelham, and Mosholu parkways, the Major Deegan Expressway, and the Hutchinson River Parkway connect with the Merritt Parkway, the New England Expressway, and arterial highways in Westchester. The Cross-Bronx Expressway will connect with the George Washington Bridge and other main arteries.

Another great looping expressway will carry traffic from the Gowanus Parkway around Brooklyn Heights and through Brooklyn and Queens to the LaGuardia Airport. This highway will connect with all the East River bridges as well as with the Brooklyn-Battery and Queens Midtown tunnels. In Queens all the main arterial routes will connect with the Long Island parkways, and the Van Wyck Expressway leads from the Idlewild Airport to the Queens Midtown Tunnel via Queens Boulevard and the Queens Midtown Expressway.

Plans were well advanced in 1948 for the completion of the encircling of Manhattan with express routes, together with a crosstown expressway connecting the Holland Tunnel and the Williamsburg and Manhattan bridges. Franklin D. Roosevelt (East River) Drive and the West Side Highway were being extended to the Battery and joined with connections to the tunnel to Brooklyn. Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive is to be extended northward to connect with the Harlem River Drive.

The Master Plan also shows an express crossing in midtown Manhattan connecting the Lincoln and Queens vehicular tunnels, and proposals have been made for bringing traffic to the surface in a new street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, with an underground bus terminal connecting with the tunnels. This plan includes an underground loop up Park Avenue to the Grand Central Terminal. It was also proposed to extend the present subway shuttle in 42nd Street from river to river, using smaller cars, with stops at all the avenues and in the center of the long blocks.²

Important improvements in the vicinity of the United Nations site include the widening of First Avenue and the construction of a vehicular tunnel to carry traffic underground through the area. Additional connections with Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive are provided, and East 47th Street is to be widened to permit the creation of parks facing the international headquarters.

To reduce surface congestion, the Port of New York Authority has a union bus terminal under construction on West 41st Street, west of Ninth Avenue, with ramps into the Lincoln Tunnel. An airline bus terminal also is planned for

² For details of this plan see minority report of City Planning Commissioner Cleveland Rodgers to the Board of Estimate, November 14, 1946, contained in a report entitled, "Selected Measures for the Partial Relief of Traffic Congestion in New York City."

the East Side at 39th Street, and a union terminal for motor trucks is under construction by the Port Authority near the entrance to the Holland Tunnel.

Parking remains the most serious of traffic problems in New York, as in other cities. It is more difficult in New York because of the high costs of land in areas where such facilities are most needed. Efforts to multiply storage space for cars have been of many kinds. New zoning regulations were drafted in 1947 to permit such facilities in districts where they had not previously been permitted, and the city sought to encourage private interests to invest in parking facilities.

Large developments and new buildings of all kinds are being designed to provide space for parking cars and for off-street loading and unloading. Manhattan, of course, will always have serious traffic and parking problems. One reason for this situation is that the city now has the finest arterial highway and parkway system of any country in the world, and automobiles are more freely used than ever before. But Greater New York and the entire metropolitan area, with their hundreds of widely separated sections, have been welded into a single, unified community.

New York City was slow in meeting the demands of aviation. The first city airport, Floyd Bennett Field, was not officially opened until May, 1931.³ It was not a success, since the commercial airlines preferred to use the more conveniently located Newark airport. F. H. LaGuardia, a veteran flier in the First World War, was an aviation enthusiast, and when he became Mayor he determined that New York should have an airport superior to any in the country.

Accordingly, in 1935, the city purchased the Curtiss-Wright landing field at North Beach, which at the time consisted of 105 acres, with three small sheet-metal hangars. Some 130 acres of upland were purchased, and work was started on enlarging the site for the airport that became LaGuardia Field. This was the largest project of its kind undertaken by the Works-Progress Administration during the depression. Some twelve thousand men were employed in filling in the land under water. This was done by shifting the 70-foot mountain of ashes and debris from Riker's Island, directly across Flushing Bay, which had been used for years as a dump by the Department of Sanitation.

A large part of the original cost of LaGuardia Field, \$40,000,000, was borne by the Federal government. The attractive Administration Building, designed by Delano & Aldrich, was considered ultra-modern, and a special feature was the elevated promenade, which visitors may enter by paying ten cents. New York was proud of her new airport, but it soon proved inadequate. By 1945 a peak

³ Floyd Bennett was a Brooklyn boy who joined the Navy and in 1925 became an aviator, pilot, and mechanic. He flew over the North Pole with Admiral Byrd and in 1928 gave his life in an attempt to rescue a German flier wrecked on Greenley Island off Labrador. The Brooklyn airport named for him was dedicated on June 27, 1930.

load of 600 planes used the field in a 24-hour period. The airport was of immense value during the war when the government took control of the airlines.

The field proved deficient in many ways as planes became larger and land planes largely replaced seaplanes for overseas flights. Meantime, on February 9, 1942, the United States Navy took over the Floyd Bennett Field and turned it into a Naval Air Training station, paying \$8,500,000 for the property. Part of this sum was used by the city to pay for a site for a new airport at Idlewild, on Jamaica Bay. The city promptly started developing the Idlewild site for the greatest terminal airport in the world. It covers approximately 5,000 acres, an area equal to all the land in Manhattan from Central Park to the Battery.

The city had invested some \$60,000,000 in Idlewild by 1947, but even partial operation of the field was delayed for three years by a jurisdictional fight between electrical unions over drawing a cable through a 400-foot duct to the temporary administration building. Further delays grew out of financing and operation. Mayor LaGuardia worked out a plan under which the city was to issue bonds to build hangars; these bonds were to be refinanced later by the airlines. In the interval the bonds and other costs of the airport reduced the city's borrowings for other capital projects.

Commissioner Moses, as a member of the City Planning Commission, opposed these airport expenditures, insisting that the airports should be financed by an airport authority. Following the election in 1945, Mr. Moses persuaded Mayor-elect O'Dwyer that the costs of Idlewild should be taken out of the capital budget. A city Airport Authority was set up in 1946, but it never became fully operative.

Meantime the Regional Plan Association sponsored and organized a Regional Airport Conference, including representatives of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, the Civil Aeronautics Administration, the Port of New York Authority, and the city. As a result of this conference a report was prepared showing the present and future airport needs of the metropolitan district and recommending a comprehensive plan for regional development. This plan was approved by the Civil Aeronautics Administration.

It was shown that the New York area handled more than twice the commercial aircraft movements of Chicago and Washington combined, which are the next largest in the country. In 1946 air passengers entering and leaving New York totaled more than 4,000,000, and it was estimated that by 1950 this figure would be 17,000,000, and 32,000,000 by 1960. The report recommended a fourth major airport, in addition to the added capacity of the Idlewild, LaGuardia, Floyd Bennett, and Newark airports, as well as numerous secondary fields in the region.

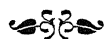
After long negotiations, the O'Dwyer administration worked out arrangements under which the Port of New York Authority took over the operation

of the city's airports for a fifty-year period. The plan involved a transfer of the Floyd Bennett Field from the Navy, to relieve the pressure on the LaGuardia Airport while Idlewild was being completed. Later the Port of New York Authority entered into an agreement for the operation of the Newark Airport as part of an integrated regional plan which will assure New York's place as the world's greatest aviation center.

The city has developed plans for expressways connecting the Idlewild, LaGuardia, and Floyd Bennett fields with the main arterial highway and parkway system. So far, however, as in the case of the railroads, there is no comprehensive plan for the unification of all forms of transportation. With the tremendous increase in air travel and with air freight also developing rapidly, it is essential that union terminal facilities be provided in Manhattan. Such a terminal has been suggested in the midtown area, between Fifth Avenue and the Avenue of the Americas, from 34th to 39th Streets, to be reached by connecting the Lincoln and Queens vehicular tunnels. This is part of a larger plan for relieving surface traffic conditions in Midtown.

The new expressway and parkway system and the new parks, housing, airports, and other improvements are creating the new kind of city. It is new in form, and it makes possible new patterns for urban living. When fully integrated with the various kinds of modern transportation, greater freedom of movement will further enhance the advantages and values growing out of the concentration of those related activities which are the basis and justification for cities.

Chapter Twenty-eight



New York's Front Yard and Play Spaces

MANHATTAN begins at what was once known as "Weepers' Point," at the island's tip, corresponding to the "Weepers' Tower" in old Amsterdam where relatives and friends watched loved ones put out to sea or anxiously awaited incoming vessels. It ends at Fort Tryon and Inwood parks, an acropolis topped by The Cloisters, embedded in schist and embroidered by heather. There are many parks in between, but not nearly enough where open spaces are most badly needed. Manhattan and Greater New York, however, have a wonderful park system that has been rapidly expanded in the past two decades and is still growing.

The tip of Manhattan ceased to be the seat of government when Nieuw Amsterdam got her first *Stadt Huys* in 1653-54, and it became known as the Battery when the British built fortifications around it. When New York was preparing to become the national capital, a presidential mansion was erected on the site of the present Customs House. President Washington never lived there, but this first "White House," known as Government House, was later occupied by Governors Jay and Clinton.

The Battery has always been the threshold over which millions of immigrants have stepped to enter America. Although Ellis Island replaced Fort Clinton as the immigration station, immigrants are still landed at the Barge Office at the Battery. Fort Clinton also served as Castle Garden, where Jenny Lind sang on her first visit to New York. Later it became the Aquarium, which is to be replaced by the Oceanarium at Coney Island. After a controversy between Commissioner Moses and embattled antiquarians seeking to save the fort, the Federal government agreed to pay for its restoration, but its fate was undetermined in 1948. The Battery was disfigured by elevated structures and an old elevated line still connects with the South Ferry to Staten Island. The area was torn up during the construction of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel and the approach highways. Nevertheless, a new and larger park is emerging.

Bowling Green, where Peter Minuit made his famous bargain with the Indians, was New York's first park. From 1639 to 1647 it was part parade ground and part hog-and-cattle market. In 1732 it was fenced off and leased to John Chambers, Peter Bayard, and Peter Jay for use as a private bowling green, the charge being one peppercom a year. It was here that the statue of George III was erected in 1770 and torn down in 1776. In 1896 the descendents of Abraham DePeyster, who was Mayor from 1691 to 1695, erected the present statue in his memory. Coenties Slip was filled in about 1835, and that area became a popular rendezvous for seamen and homeless men. In 1880 this breathing space was named Jeannette Park for the ill-fated vessel of the Jeannette Polar Expedition which had been promoted by James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald*.

Although still common land and known as The Fields, what is now City Hall Park began making history long before the Revolution. A tablet in the park honors Colonel Isaac Barre, who denounced the Stamp Act and declared that Americans were "Sons of Liberty," thus giving a name to the radicals agitating against Britain. A replica of the Liberty Pole now stands on the west side of City Hall. The Alms House, Gaol, and Bridewell Prison stood in The Fields before the present City Hall was planned in 1803. General Washington reviewed raw troops and heard the Declaration of Independence read in the park in 1776 before crossing the ferry to fight and lose the Battle of Long Island. In 1911 an oak was planted in the park in memory of Jacob Leisler, who was hanged there in 1681.

Foley Square covers parts of the old Collect Pond. This pond, fed by springs, together with its outlets and marsh, was once a barrier to the north. Early plans to connect the pond with the North and East rivers by canals were abandoned when it was found that the tide levels of the two rivers were the same. In 1808, as an early work-relief-project, the city undertook to drain the section and fill it in. The area was converted into a kind of inland Coney Island, and some flimsy houses and taverns were erected around the notorious "Five Points."

Living conditions in the area had not greatly improved at the turn of the twentieth century, when Jacob Riis was waging his campaign for housing and other reforms. It was largely through Riis's efforts that Columbus Park replaced Paradise Square and Mulberry Bend. The transformation of the area was slow, partly because of faulty foundations, but in time imposing public buildings surrounded the three sides of Foley Square, which is a square only in name. Plans for the Manhattan Civic Center, described elsewhere, will complete the rehabilitation of the section and provide for numerous parks and landscaped areas.

The Washington Square park came into existence as a result of the yellow fever epidemic of 1822, when the city bought a part of Elbert Herring's farm

to enlarge the potters' field that had existed there since 1789. It has other gruesome associations, since its trees were used for gallows at times. It was later abandoned as a burying ground, and the area was first enlarged and turned into a parade ground and then laid out as a park in 1827.

In a few years prominent citizens began to build handsome residences around the square. New York University was established on the east, and the area began to make literary history. Samuel F. B. Morse painted, taught art, and experimented with his telegraph instruments there; Draper worked there to perfect his daguerreotype invention and continued writing; and Colt worked on his revolver while Henry James played in the park near his birthplace. Henry James exiled himself to England, as John Reed was later to have himself enshrined in the Kremlin in Moscow; but Greenwich Village and Washington Square were to continue to add to the literary associations of the region. Thomas Wolfe did some of his best work there, and Eleanor Roosevelt deserted the White House and Hyde Park for an apartment overlooking the square, where she wrote her column "My Day." Residents of Washington Square, headed by William Rhinelanders Stewart, financed the erection in 1889, of a temporary Washington Arch as part of the centenary celebration of Washington's inauguration. This led to the movement for the erection of the permanent arch designed by Stanford White and finished in 1895.

Stuyvesant Square, consisting of four acres that were part of Peter Stuyvesant's farm, was a center of opulence in the 1860's and the only open space in a large area on the lower East Side, except for Tompkins Square. Dominated by St. George's Church, where J. Pierpont Morgan worshipped, and faced by pretentious homes, Stuyvesant Square vied with St. John's Park on the West Side, created earlier by the Trinity Church Corporation as a private park to attract residents to the St. John's Church parish.

De Witt Clinton, who demonstrated his vision by building the Erie Canal, realized far better than the commissioners who laid out New York's gridiron street system that the future city would need parks—many parks, both large and small. The commission, reporting in 1811, explained the lack of open spaces in their plan by saying that since the island had rivers on both sides it was always swept by fresh breezes and therefore did not require open spaces. Nearly five years before, in 1807, De Witt Clinton had laid out a plan calling for a park area increase of 500 acres, nearly 400 acres of them below 40th Street. A park proposed by him between 23rd and 24th Streets was scorned because the location was considered "inaccessible."

Abram S. Hewitt, Mayor in 1887-88 and also a park enthusiast, obtained legislation to provide \$1,000,000 a year for small parks in Manhattan such as he had seen in Manchester and other English cities. He succeeded in establishing parks at the foot of East 86th Street, at Corlear's Hook, and at Mulberry

and Bayard streets, the last of which later became Columbus Park. Hewitt's interest in parks continued long after he left City Hall, and he became chairman of the Advisory Committee on Small Parks in 1896.

Union Square, now dominated by flamboyant signs, was one of the few open spaces incorporated on the gridiron street plan adopted in 1811. The old Bowery joined the Bloomingdale Road near Union Place. When Broadway was laid out the intention was to have it join both the Bowery and Fourth Avenue at Union Square. Instead it was diverted at Eleventh Street by Hendrick Brevoort, who at the age of ninety stood guard with a gun and refused to have his apple tree and farmhouse removed. Swinging Broadway to the west to connect with the Bloomingdale Road created the sharp turn that became known as "Dead Man's Curve" in the days when the cable cars made the swing without disconnecting their cables.

During and after the Civil War, Union Square replaced City Hall Park as a gathering place for radicals and, much like Hyde Park in London, had been used for protest meetings and the exercise of freedom of assembly and free speech. These have ranged from meetings of Young Republicans and the unemployed mass meetings in 1873 to gatherings of I.W.W.s, Socialists, anarchists, and Communists today. Formerly there was a small enclosure with iron gates locked at sundown, but the fence was removed in 1870.

Meantime Union Square and the vicinity had become the center of many activities. The Academy of Music was at Fourteenth Street and Irving Place; Wallach's and other theaters, Tiffany's, Gorham's, Vantine's, and other stores, and several famous hotels and restaurants were near by. The square acquired a fountain after Croton water was piped to the city in 1842. It already had Henry Kirke Brown's equestrian statue of Washington, unveiled on July 4, 1856, at the place where the General had re-entered the city after the British evacuation on November 25, 1783. Frederic Bartholdi, the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, also did the statue of Lafayette, which was presented by French residents of New York in gratitude for American sympathy for France during the Franco-German war of 1870.

Gramercy Park was originally a part of the farm of James Duane, Mayor, in 1784-89. "Gramercy" is a corruption of the Dutch *Krom mersche*, or *Krom moerasje*, meaning "crooked little swamp." Cedar Creek passed through the area on its way from what is now Madison Square to the East River. Samuel Ruggles, who had become the owner, drained the swamp in 1831, laid out a square in the London fashion, and surrounded it with an eight-foot iron fence, with gates to which residents in the neighborhood have keys.

This square is a notable example of the effect of even a small open space on surrounding property values in crowded Manhattan. Over a long period Gramercy Park attracted people of wealth and taste, many of whom made sub-

stantial contributions to New York's history. Mayor Duane, James W. Gerard, Stanford White, Cyrus W. Field, Samuel J. Tilden, and Edwin Booth were among the notable residents of Gramercy Park at different periods. Theodore Roosevelt was born on Twentieth Street, not far away. The Booth home became the Players' Club, and the room where he died is still preserved as he left it. The Tilden house became the National Arts Club.

Madison Square, like Washington Square, began as a paupers' burying ground. Later an Arsenal was built there, and the six acres were used as a parade ground. Brooklynites may writhe with envy, but it was here, in 1842 that baseball, which became known as "the New York Game," was given impetus by the Knickerbocker Club. When James Harper, head of the Harper publishing firm, became Mayor in 1844, he enlarged Madison Square, closed the old Boston Post Road, and improved Fifth Avenue. Madison Square was officially opened as a park in 1847. Madison Cottage, a famous old inn, was razed in 1852, and the Fifth Avenue Hotel was built on the site at 23rd Street in 1858.

Bryant Park was also a potters' field during the yellow fever epidemic of 1822, and it was the site of the famous Crystal Palace, where New York's first World's Fair was held in 1853. Later the Croton Reservoir was built on the Fifth Avenue side where the library now stands, and the rest of the land was called Reservoir Park in 1871. In 1884 the name was changed to honor William Cullen Bryant, poet and editor. Bryant Park as reconstructed by Commissioner Moses in 1933 along lines suggesting the Tuileries in Paris is one of the beauty spots of Midtown.

Greeley Square, Herald Square, Times Square, and Columbus Circle are mere slivers of land where Broadway cuts diagonally across the gridiron of streets. These developed as the town grew, and, as their names suggest, they represent the keen rivalry of newspapers for prominent locations. Columbus Circle narrowly escaped being named for William Randolph Hearst or one of his newspapers. He sponsored the Maine Monument, bought a large amount of real estate in the vicinity, and had offices there at one time. Neither of the newspapers commemorated in two of the squares is now published there. The *Herald*, merged with Greeley's old paper, the *Tribune*, is published in West 40th Street, and the *Times* built a more suitable plant a block from its former uptown home in Times Square. Hearst's main plant is on the lower East Side.

The story of Central Park is told in some detail in the chapter dealing with Andrew H. Green, who was instrumental in opening up all the northern part of Manhattan Island.

Riverside Park was a part of the plan of the Central Park Commissioners and was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Property was acquired by the city in 1872—not without scandal, since Tweed and his gang were involved—but Riverside Drive and Park were completed from 72nd Street to 129th Street

by 1885, and as far as 145th Street in 1908. The whole of Riverside Park was reconstructed by Robert Moses between 1934 and 1940, including the covering of the New York Central tracks and the construction of the parkway at the river's edge. At 158th Street, Riverside Park becomes Fort Washington Park, but the entire strip along the Hudson has become a park, with different names at intervals.

Fort Tyron Park, designed by Olmsted, son of one of the creators of Central Park, is on the site of the fort built in 1776 and taken by Hessians during the Revolution. Here in 1909 John D. Rockefeller, Jr., bought sixty-two acres, which were given to the city in 1930, theoretically in exchange for streets in Radio City. Mr. Rockefeller not only built The Cloisters, which is maintained as a branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but bought a dozen miles of the Palisades across the Hudson to give the museum and park a proper setting. Inwood Hill, although proposed as a park in 1876, was not developed until 1938. Isham Park, adjoining it, was the home of William B. Isham, whose descendants gave the land to the city. The Harlem River Ship Canal was straightened out, and this additional twenty acres became part of the development under Mr. Moses in 1938, which included construction of the Henry Hudson Parkway, the Henry Hudson Bridge, and the area beyond the Harlem River where the monument to Henry Hudson stands in Spuyten Duyvil.

Roger Morris Park is named for the Morris who built the famous house now known as the Jumel Mansion. Morris departed for England in 1775, and Washington used his house as his headquarters; Stephen Jumel, a Frenchman, bought the mansion and in 1810 restored it. Aaron Burr in his tragic old age married Madame Jumel in 1836 and lived there for a short period. It was acquired by the city in 1903. Mount Morris Square, located east of Fifth Avenue at 120th Street and acquired in 1841, is best known for its fire tower and alarm bell, placed there about 1865.

High Bridge Park, at Amsterdam Avenue and 183rd Street, occupies a part of the ridge taken to build High Bridge and the Aqueduct. This, the oldest of the city's bridges, was built in 1837-48 to bring the Croton water supply over the Harlem River. Morningside, St. Nicholas, and Colonial parks are also on the ridge between the Hudson and Harlem rivers above 110th Street. Land for Thomas Jefferson Park, on the East Side from 111th to 114th Streets was taken before the consolidation of Greater New York and opened in 1902.

Carl Schurz Park (formerly East End Park) was established in 1891 and renamed in 1911 for the German Revolutionary Civil War hero, leader of the new Republican Party, editor of the *New York Evening Post* and *Harper's Weekly*, and civil service reformer. In it stands the Gracie Mansion.

Jacob Walton had built a house at what was known as Horn's Hook before the Revolution. This was taken over by the American forces, who improvised

a fort and mounted small guns there. On September 15, 1776, the house was destroyed by gunfire from British warships, and the Americans abandoned the area to the British, who used it as an army camp during the occupation. In 1799 Archibald Gracie, a wealthy Scottish merchant, acquired the land, still surrounded by a stockade, and built a white frame Colonial house on the high ground overlooking the East River. The city, in 1891, acquired the Gracie Mansion and the surrounding land and added it to Carl Schurz Park. The house was restored by the Park Department and in 1945 it became the official residence for New York's Mayors. In front are the usual two lamps which it has long been the custom to place in front of the homes of the city's chief executives.

Inspired by the creation of Central Park and realizing the need for reserving land for the future needs of the rapidly growing city, leading citizens in various parts of the metropolitan district began agitation for more parks. The New York Park Association, formed in 1882, made a special plea in a brochure entitled *More Public Parks; Lungs for the Metropolis*. Doubtless these enthusiasts were considered visionary when they declared:

When we consider the gigantic strides the nation has made within the last twenty-five years, despite the losses caused by the most destructive Civil War recorded in the history of the world, we shall more fully realize its grand destiny. A nation of nearly 200,000,000, all living under the one government and speaking the one language, must exercise a vast, a controlling influence on the civilization, the policy, the commerce of the world, and the great metropolis, the commercial capital of that nation, must be the financial centre around which the business interests of the whole continent shall revolve. London shall no longer hold the balance of power in the monetary world, and Lombard street and the Bourse shall be governed in their movements by the Wall street barometer. The New York of the future will be not only to the new, but to the old world as well, what London and Paris are to Europe—the great centre of capital, commerce, and enterprise, the arbiter of taste and fashion, the magnet to attract travelers from the ends of the earth.

In its appeal to the Legislature for "Lungs for the Metropolis" the association declared that New York must be made worthy of its position. "If our officials are equal to the opportunity," they asserted, "they will secure a generous area for park purposes. This they owe to the whole population, but in a special manner do they owe it to that more numerous portion, the workers and toilers, the men who have built up the great but still unfinished city, and for whom these spacious pleasure grounds would supply a want which the Central Park can never satisfy."

Mayor Franklin Edson responded by appointing a commission which reported to the Legislature in 1884, and the Legislature authorized the acquisition of 3,757 acres now included in Van Cortlandt, Pelham Bay, Bronx, Crotona,

Claremont, and St. Mary's parks and the Mosholu Parkway, all in The Bronx. While the metropolis was thus securing invaluable tracts of land on the outskirts, the demand for small parks and open places in the more congested areas was increasing. Mayor Hewitt was active in promoting parks as well as better transit, and he supported the Society of Playgrounds formed in 1890 with Charles B. Stover as president.

Stover was for years a great campaigner for parks and playgrounds, through the Outdoor Recreation League, the settlements, and other agencies, and became Park Commissioner of Manhattan in Gaynor's administration. Under Stover, parks and playgrounds were multiplied in many areas. One of his achievements was the winning of his fight to keep elevated tracks from the Delancey Street approach to the Williamsburg Bridge and to convert the street into a wide boulevard, later named in honor of Jacob H. Schiff. It was through Stover's foresight and zeal, too, that the city acquired Rockaway Beach, which appropriately was named Riis Park, since Jacob Riis had lived for years in Richmond Hill, Queens.

The City of Brooklyn also became park-conscious, largely through Andrew H. Green and the creation of Central Park. James S. T. Shanahan, who worked with Green in the long fight for consolidation, was the leader in the movement that led to the purchase, in 1859, of 526 acres from the Litchfield estate, for \$4,000,000. This was the beginning of Prospect Park as well as the Grand Army Plaza and the Ocean and Eastern parkways, designed by Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. The land for Forest Park, in Queens, was also purchased before the consolidation of the city.

The first Act of Consolidation put Greater New York's parks under a Park Board, but later the five boroughs had separate park commissioners and departments until they were consolidated under Commissioner Moses in 1934. Many historic squares and parks were rehabilitated. The zoo in Central Park was transformed into a picture-book zoo, in Bronx Park the animals were placed in an outdoor setting, and Brooklyn got a real zoo. Randall's Island was converted into a recreational center. Reclamation of the city's waterfront for recreation purposes was one of Mr. Moses's outstanding achievements. His projects encircle the greater city. Riverside Park was increased in area by filling it along the new parkway; Battery Park will be enlarged, and a new 35-acre park has already been created on the lower East Side.

An interesting feature of the development on the East River is the Bristol Basin, made from the rubble of bombed Bristol which was brought to New York as ballast during the war. New recreational areas appear all along Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive and the Harlem River, and Ward's Island is to become a park reached by a pedestrian bridge at 103rd Street. In The Bronx, Pelham Bay Park was converted into a beach by bringing in sand from the seaside, and Soundview

Park and The Bronx approaches to the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge are park areas markedly in contrast with the older bridge approaches.

Brooklyn, Queens, and Richmond offered the best opportunities for waterfront development, and Mr. Moses made the best of them. In Richmond, Great Kills Park, to be reached by the new Willowbrook Parkway, will be one of the largest of the city's parks and will add another fine public seaside recreational area. Richmond has many beautiful parks.

In Brooklyn most of the new arterial highways and parkways have parks, playgrounds, and landscaped areas for their full lengths. When the beaches at Coney Island and the Rockaways came under the control of Commissioner Moses, he began their rehabilitation and expansion. Marine Park, on Jamaica Bay in Brooklyn, grew out of 2,000 acres of marshland given to the city in 1920 by the Whitney family. The entire Jamaica Bay area except the Idlewild and Floyd Bennett airports, is being changed from a nondescript mixture of unrestricted uses and undeveloped marsh into residential and recreational districts. The entire Rockaway Peninsula is also being transformed. A new corridor park links Flushing Meadow and Cunningham parks in Queens.

The most spectacular of all of Mr. Moses's park achievements, however, was the transformation of Flushing Meadows. This large marshy area remained undeveloped and was used as a city dump for a quarter of a century, with the result that it was one of the most offensive sections of the city in 1933. The redemption of the section began when Mr. Moses constructed an extension of the Grand Central Parkway to the Triborough Bridge. This ran along the west side of the marsh, and some of it was taken for park and parkway purposes.

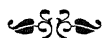
In 1937 the daughter of Joseph Shadgren, a naturalized Belgian, suggested to her father that New York celebrate the 150th anniversary of George Washington's inauguration. Shadgren not only conceived the idea of a world's fair as the most fitting kind of celebration but also proposed Flushing Meadow as the site for the fair. When George McAneny and a small group of New Yorkers took up Shadgren's idea a controversy arose over the site, but Commissioner Moses insisted that the only site he would help develop was Flushing Meadow and this only on condition that the site become a park after the fair.

When the location was finally determined Mr. Moses was given the job of preparing the site. This he did in record time, performing the prodigious task of leveling the mountainous city dump and filling in the marsh, installing utilities, and landscaping a park into which the World's Fair buildings could be placed without harm to the permanent park improvements. The global war began before the fair ended, and the reconversion of the park was delayed, but Mr. Moses had planned and builded better than he knew. Later, when the city faced the problem of finding temporary headquarters for the United Nations and an appropriate meeting place for the Assembly, the permanent City Build-

ing in Flushing Meadow Park solved the difficulty. At a cost of \$2,000,000 the building was converted into a modern gathering place where the representatives of the United Nations could meet comfortably in pleasant surroundings. The city's next task is to give the permanent headquarters in Manhattan an attractive setting.

In the aggregate, the numerous open spaces around new housing developments and along arterial highways and parkways, together with the enlarged playgrounds for schools, which serve entire neighborhoods, provide more breathing space in New York than some of the better-known parks. Together they are fast transforming the crowded metropolis.

Chapter Twenty-nine



Taxing and Spending a Billion a Year

NEW YORK'S expense budget for 1947-48 totaled \$1,031,961,754.73. The proposed capital budget for 1948 was \$244,541,292.58, with a five-year capital program totaling about \$500,000,000.00. The city has a debt of approximately \$2,856,717,190.00 and about 153,800 employees on its pay rolls, exclusive of transit workers. Despite these staggering figures the budgets are balanced, the city's credit is excellent, and its tax rates compare favorably with those of smaller communities. Valuations are not out of line with market prices, and most taxpayers—tenants and property owners—unquestionably get more for their money than anywhere else in the world.

New York is the richest community on earth, but the city corporation is relatively poor; even billion-dollar budgets fall far short of meeting the needs of the millions who live in the metropolis. The city simply tries to do the impossible and comes surprisingly near accomplishing it. The budget, like everything else in New York, just grew until it was in scale with the dimensions of the skyscraper town and as complex as the community itself. Yet the essentials are easy to understand.

New York's fiscal and tax problems have not changed much since the early days. All the Dutch governors had trouble collecting sufficient taxes to keep the fortifications in repair or to make improvements. The first permanent taxing power of the corporate city for street improvements and drainage was not granted until 1691. For the next fifty years taxes for special purposes were voted only three times. The Poor Rate was collected by the Church until after the Revolution.

During the next century the city paid its operating expenses largely by selling and leasing the land conveyed to it under the Dongan and Montgomery charters. Additional revenue came from ferries, markets, and docks. That these sources were insufficient is indicated by the growth of the city's debt, which was

\$13,000,000 by 1835. Most of the city's common lands were sold off during the next thirty years, and the city debt had risen to \$120,000,000 before the end of the Tweed regime. The City of New York's net bonded debt at the time of the consolidation was \$136,105,414, and that of other communities merged was as follows:

City of Brooklyn.....	\$79,501,253
Borough of Queens.....	9,572,800
Borough of Richmond.....	3,295,191

Thus the total for the city at the end of 1898 was \$257,150,661.

In a short time Greater New York was in better shape financially than its separate parts had been before the consolidation, and all sections received benefits in the form of better transit, bridges and tunnels, and other facilities and services. This was made possible by the steady rise in real estate values, which governs tax levies and borrowing. The city's tax levy is limited to 2 per cent and its borrowing capacity to 10 per cent of the average realty valuations over a five-year period.

In 1948 the city expected to collect less revenue from real estate than from other taxes. The total of \$1,031,961,754.73 included \$143,738,230.52 to be received from the state and \$31,319,416.00 in Federal aid. Other exempt funds left \$665,235,038.53 to be met by \$344,342,905.50 from general revenues, and only \$489,430,406.72 from real estate taxes. This was the first time that real estate had paid such a small proportion of the total expense bill.

General revenues include about \$100,000,000 from the sales tax, about \$50,000,000 from state-shared taxes, \$21,000,000 from business, and about \$41,000,000 from water, on which the city makes a profit. Other sources of revenue are docks, ferries, traffic fines, marriage and dog licenses, and so on. Debt service, which includes amortization and interest payments on what the city owes, amounted in the 1947-48 budget to \$201,583,273. Some of this debt is especially burdensome. At the time of the consolidation, when New York took over all the indebtedness of surrounding communities, there had been an issue of 7 per cent non-callable bonds for \$278,000. The money had been used by the West Farms section of the Bronx to lay some wooden planks on a street. In 1947, \$198,000 worth of those bonds were still outstanding and cost the city almost \$14,000 interest for the year; the bonds do not mature till 2147.¹

The expense budget includes the city pay rolls, repairs and maintenance of buildings and other plants, and the initial costs of local improvements recouped through special assessments spread over several years. Interest on indebtedness is also included, but this is exempt from the state 2 per cent limitation. The real estate tax levy for 1947-48 came within \$1,569,048.14 of the legal limit based

¹ *The New Yorker*, July 12, 1947.

on a five-year average of total assessed valuations of \$16,123,059,058.60.

The capital budget provides for permanent improvements, financed by long-term bonds, usually for thirty or forty years. The total amount the city may borrow is limited to 10 per cent of assessed valuations. Under special acts of the Legislature, however, borrowings for self-sustaining and self-liquidating projects are exempt from the debt limit. Bonds for the water supply are exempt; so are certain transit bonds. Since the city pays off large sums each year, the debt and borrowing capacity varies from budget to budget.

If all the money in the capital budget for 1947 had been authorized it would have left a "cushion" of over \$100,000,000 of borrowing capacity. The city cannot go bankrupt. When it taxes, spends, and borrows up to the legal limit it has to stop and go without the facilities and services needed. When real emergencies arise or enough pressure is brought to bear on the Legislature, the city is permitted to levy additional taxes (such as sales taxes) and to borrow outside the debt limit. In 1940, \$315,100,000 was permitted for transit unification. Self-sustaining bonds, such as those for water, certain docks, and so forth, are also exempt from the debt limitation. The exempt bonds made the city's over-all debt \$2,856,712,190 in 1948.

The items in the 1947-48 expense budget, exclusive of long-term debt service, charged against the 2 per cent tax limitations were as follows:

<i>Department</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Hospitals	\$ 52,340,013.60
Health	5,220,149.50
Education	126,562,379.12
Higher Education	11,238,144.61
Libraries	5,239,965.00
Sanitation	42,094,233.38
Police	71,114,628.50
Fire	44,549,688.20
Welfare	30,391,192.00
Charitable Institutions	19,495,600.00
Water Supply, Gas and Electricity	20,025,373.96
Health Insurance Plan	2,000,000.00
Public Works	10,192,842.56
Correction	5,579,516.08
Parks	14,723,401.78
Transit Operating Deficiency	24,700,000.00
Pensions	62,607,802.38
Tax Deficiency	8,566,580.28
Judgments, Snow Removal, Repaving, etc.	7,896,008.00
Debt Service (within 2% limitation)	22,845,000.00
Other city services	77,852,419.58
Total	<u>\$655,235,038.53</u>

The money appropriated in the budget is spent, by all departments of the city, mostly in service to the public. Such service departments as Education, Police, Fire, Sanitation, Public Works, Health, Hospitals, and Correction utilize most of their funds in paying salaries to their personnel.

The proposed capital budget for 1948 was as follows:

Department or Agency	
Chief Medical Examiner	\$ 24,000.00
Correction, Department of	2,248,500.00
Education, Board of	{ 28,964,945.86 }
	{ 12,020,000.00H }
Estimate, Board of	{ 4,435,000.00 }
	{ 1,000,000.00H }
Fire Department	1,051,286.27
Health, Department of	1,577,065.50
Higher Education, Board of	1,096,700.00
Hospitals, Department of	32,658,047.57
Libraries	3,035,744.00
Marine and Aviation, Department of	15,959,800.00
Markets, Department of	2,076,500.00
Museums and Institutions	938,000.00
Parks, Department of	{ 5,454,136.25 }
	{ 872,324.00H }
Police Department	982,685.00
President, Borough of The Bronx	580,000.00
President, Borough of Brooklyn	671,000.00
President, Borough of Manhattan	7,745,700.00
President, Borough of Queens	789,500.00
President, Borough of Richmond	246,850.00
Public Works, Department of	{ 8,942,700.00 }
	{ 20,575,000.00S }
Purchase, Department of	0
Sanitation, Department of	5,899,700.00
Transportation, Board of	42,531,477.13
Water Supply, Board of	51,927,000.00
Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, Department of	21,623,955.00
Welfare, Department of	3,081,000.00
Totals	{ \$244,541,292.58 }
	{ 34,467,324.00H, S }

NOTE:—H and S indicate sums recommended to be raised outside the debt limit. No substantial changes were made in the capital budget, as adopted.

Valuations of property for tax purposes are made by the Tax Department, although there is a separate Board of Assessors to handle assessments for local improvements. All taxes are collected by the Department of Finance, headed by the Treasurer, who also is custodian of all moneys received by the city. If

real estate taxes are not paid he has the sad duty of foreclosing on the property.

The Treasurer acts on the advice of the Law Department, which handles more legal work than any law office in the country except that of the Federal government. Since the city's business is all according to law, the composite Corporation Counsel is a busy man. When it comes to spending the taxpayer's money, the Bureau of the Budget does the advising; the Department of Purchase is the city's buyer of supplies and equipment; and there is a special Department of Investigation that goes into every phase of administration. If there is anything wrong, the police may be called in, followed by the District Attorney, but the latter is a state official. So was the Sheriff until 1942.

New York City has the only sheriff who is not a county officer. Before 1942 each of the five counties in the Greater City had sheriffs, with their own staffs of deputies and other employees. Those offices were a principal source of political patronage and were highly lucrative. Attempts to abolish these and other county offices at the time when the new city charter was being drafted were defeated. Nevertheless, the reform was put through by referendum in 1941. Under the new law, a single City Sheriff is appointed by the Mayor from three names submitted by the Civil Service Commission. When the first City Sheriff reorganized his office the only experienced employee under any of the former sheriffs who had Civil Service status and could be made a permanent member of the staff was a telephone operator. All other employees were political appointees and therefore ineligible. The City Sheriff represents the sovereignty of the state and carries out the orders and mandates of the courts. The police are responsible, in the first instance, for criminal law enforcement, but the Sheriff is there behind the policemen. In New York City the Sheriff may do almost anything, from serving a summons in a lawsuit to keeping a divorced husband in the civil jail for failure to pay alimony.

The city has Magistrates' Courts, a Court of Special Sessions, a Municipal Court, and a Domestic Relations Court, all of which handle minor cases in great numbers. The city also houses the state courts and pays part of the justices' salaries. As a part of the reorganization of the county government in 1942, the five county registers were eliminated and a single Register for the city was appointed under Civil Service at a saving of \$215,000 in the first eighteen months. The Register is custodian of all property records.

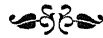
All these officials have something to do with the collecting and spending of public funds, but the most important in that field is the Comptroller. Under the Charter of 1936 the Comptroller, one of the three members of the Board of Estimate, is auditor and controller of the city's fiscal matters. The Treasurer receives and pays out the city's billions, but all the transactions are subject to the audit and control of the Comptroller, who also has a vote equal to that of the Mayor in the Board of Estimate.

The Comptroller advises the Mayor, the Board of Estimate, the City Council, the City Planning Commission, and the Director of the Budget on the city's finances. It is he who determines when bonds are to be sold, the amounts, and the rates of interest. He also has broad powers of inquiry into all fiscal matters. He is responsible for the sinking funds and pension funds, and he borrows on short-term notes in anticipation of tax collections, which makes him the city's official link with Wall Street.

The Civil Service Commission is really an employment service which handles the personnel relations between the city and its 153,000 employees. New York publishes its own daily newspaper, the *City Record*, established seventy-five years ago, which carries the official notices of the various departments. It publishes advertising at a cost of 1.7 cents a line, as compared with rates of from 50 cents to \$1.75 a line in regular newspapers. The *Record* also issues a directory, "The Little Green Book," and numerous other official publications. New York City's own radio station, WNYC, was granted full time in September, 1943. It operates under a city law "for the instruction, entertainment, recreation, and welfare of the inhabitants of the city." The departments of Fire, Police, and Sanitation all have academies or schools where they train personnel. The Fire and Police departments have their own telegraph systems. The police have their own telephones, telegraphs, and two-way radio between patrol cars. The air lanes are patrolled by flying policemen, and the harbor is covered by police as well as by fire boats.

The Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity is responsible for keeping up pressure in the water mains. It has to "boost" the water supply at different points. One of these stations, in a vault under West 40th Street, just off Fifth Avenue, lifts the Croton water from the deep shaft to serve part of lower Manhattan. The same Department has need of radio communications, including fixed, mobile, and walkie-talkie equipment. It has to trace and locate gas and water leaks and meet other emergencies. During the war, over 32,000 snap switches had to be installed to effect the total blackouts. Its real headache, however, is to stop the waste of water. A single leaky faucet can waste more water in twenty-four hours than is required for ordinary purposes by a family of six persons in the same period.

Chapter Thirty



Co-ordinating Public Services and Facilities

THE development of New York's health and hospital services, like that of its other services, has gone through various stages. The early beginnings reflect the indifference, ignorance, and superstitions commonly prevalent in Europe, aggravated by the exceptional conditions that arose here. The early settlers brought diseases with them, and, since they came from every part of the world, New York acquired all the ills to which human flesh is heir but lacked the remedies to treat them.

As early as 1658, the surgeon of the Dutch West India Company suggested a hospital building for the Almshouse, which was used until 1680. This was the beginning of Bellevue Hospital, the present plant of which was constructed in 1811-18. The incorporation of New York, when it came under British rule, took place a year before the Black Plague in England. New York was to have plenty of plagues, but it was spared this scourge.

More than a century later the city's first hospital was established. This was the New York Hospital, opened on Chambers Street in 1771. Now one of the greatest and most modern institutions of its kind, the hospital had a tempestuous beginning, a long struggle, and a slow growth. A serious riot, in which a few persons were killed, grew out of rumors that cadavers were being used in the hospital for studying diseases.

Naturally the doctors needed to learn as much as they could about human bodies and disease. Yellow fever and other plagues wiped out large segments of the population from time to time. A hundred years ago New York was a veritable pest hole. Some overcrowded slum sections of the city were rife with communicable diseases and terrible sanitation conditions, bad water, damp basements, and leaky roofs and walls were a constant menace.

Housing and other reforms grew out of the slow realization that health was a community concern, but not much was done by the government. Bellevue, the

first "city hospital," was not established until 1811, and the notable public health work of Hermann Biggs came after the Civil War. Meantime, hospital service was left largely to private hands.

When the consolidation of the city took place in 1898, Manhattan had 54 hospitals, of which 42 were voluntary. In the other areas merged in Greater New York there were 78 hospitals, of which 64 were voluntary. The city gradually extended its hospital facilities but could not keep up with the demands, and in 1901 it began to pay for the care of indigent patients in voluntary institutions.

Since that time both the city and the volunteer hospitals have been greatly expanded, although there have been few new voluntary institutions. As was the case in other fields, the providing of hospital facilities was haphazard, without co-ordination, with responsibility divided between public hospitals and institutions which received some support from the city but were otherwise dependent on private contributions and fees collected from patients who could afford to pay the increasingly high costs of hospitalization.

Columbia University and the Presbyterian Hospital pooled their resources in 1925 and constructed the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center along Broadway at 165th-168th Streets. On the 28-acre site four major units of buildings, which cost thirty million dollars, provide a wealth of medical facilities. Hospitals of many kinds, a medical school, clinics, and research laboratories are available. Adjoining the medical center the state has its Psychiatric Institute and Hospital, and near by the city is building the Nightingale Hospital for the care of cancer patients.

The Jews' Hospital, established in 1852, changed its name to Mt. Sinai Hospital in 1866. During the Civil War it devoted its work to soldiers, and in the two world wars it performed valiant medical service. St. Vincent's Hospital, one of the important hospitals maintained by the Catholic Church and located in lower Manhattan on West Eleventh Street, began its existence in 1849 with a thirty-bed capacity and five Catholic Sisters as nurses. Its buildings, erected in 1899, have been added to during the years and now have a capacity of 465 beds. A fifteen-story building, to be known as the Alfred E. Smith Memorial, under construction in 1948 on West Twelfth Street, will increase the capacity of the institution to 797 beds.

A hospital survey published in 1934 showed that the city then owned and operated hospitals of various kinds valued at \$119,775,168, and that voluntary hospitals represented an investment of \$191,895,837. It was shown that the seventy or more voluntary hospitals had more beds than those used by paying patients, but many of these institutions were in obsolete buildings and had insufficient endowments. The city, at the time, was unable to provide the \$200,000,000 needed for additional buildings to house the non-paying patients or to pay the full cost of their care in volunteer hospitals. With the tremendous

increase in costs, relatively few persons could afford to pay for hospitalization, and the only alternative was to receive care at public expense.

The Associated Hospitals Service, organized in 1934, has done much to relieve this situation. Under its plan, which is a part of the Blue Cross which now operates throughout this country and in Canada, members make small payments, as insurance, and the Associated Hospitals pay specified costs of hospitalization. In New York 132 hospitals participate in this plan, under which 230,000 persons, out of a membership of 3,092,563 on June 30, 1947, received care in 1947. The New York Health Insurance Plan, organized in 1946, and other similar plans have helped to put hospital care within the means of millions. The plan has also been a boon to hospitals.

Meantime the city greatly extended its hospital program. With Federal aid many new buildings were erected during the depression, increasing the bed capacity in city hospitals to 20,500. The city entered into agreements with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, the New York University College of Medicine, the Memorial Hospital, the Cornell University Medical College, the Long Island College of Medicine, and the New York Medical College under which facilities for medical care and research were greatly expanded.

During this period plans were matured for enlarging some existing volunteer hospitals and for new institutions, including the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research and the new center of New York University College of Medicine. A degree of co-ordination entered into all these plans, and in 1947 the Hospital Council of Greater New York made public a Master Plan for Hospitals and Related Facilities for New York City. Although this Master Plan was wholly unofficial, Edwin A. Salmon, Chairman of the Hospital Council, was also Chairman of the City Planning Commission, and the plan followed the pattern of other official Master Plans.¹

For the first time in New York, if not in the world, an over-all study was accordingly made of the hospital needs and facilities of a large city. The picture presented was somewhat surprising. It showed that as of January 1, 1946, there were 32,071 general-care beds available in 145 hospitals. The total needs of the city up to 1951 were estimated at 33,500 beds for general care, and of this total 1,600 were for non-residents. The needs were based on a population of 8,000,000. In other words, New York was found to have enough hospital beds for general care to take care of all resident patients. However, the Master Plan indicated the need for the replacement of approximately 10,000 beds in some 70 hospitals that were either fire hazards or obsolete. Under the co-ordinated

¹ Mr. Salmon resigned as Chairman of the Planning Commission on November 1, 1947, to become Director of the New York University Medical Center.

plan there would be a re-allocation of facilities in relation to various sections of the city, long-term illnesses, convalescents, and psychiatric and other patients.

There are over 100 private, three state, and five Federal hospitals in Greater New York, and the Veterans Administration has plans for two additional 1,000-bed hospitals—one in Manhattan and the other in Brooklyn. The city's program includes large sums for new city hospitals which will greatly expand such city hospital centers as Bellevue, Welfare Island, and Kings County (Brooklyn) and provide general and special hospitals in all boroughs. A special bond issue was proposed in 1947 to complete this program.

The large medical centers, in addition to providing hospital facilities, are educational and research institutions where physicians and nurses are trained and medical science is developed. The Institute of Forensic Medicine at the Bellevue New York University center will teach "legal medicine," having to do with ascertaining the causes of death and their relations to law.

Preventive medicine, with special reference to keeping people well, has for some years received even more attention than hospitalization. To provide conditions that make for good health and to guard against the spread of disease, the Department of Health has an army of inspectors who watch the water, milk, and food supply, as well as engineers who check on the cleanliness of apartment houses, factories, theaters, and bathing beaches. Of primary importance are the educational campaigns carried on by radio, the press, lectures, booklets, and other means. As a result of such a campaign in 1947, some 6,000,000 people were vaccinated in a short time and a threatened outbreak of smallpox was promptly checked. The detection and treatment of tuberculosis brought deaths from that scourge down to an all-time low. Diphtheria deaths dropped from an average of 1,290 a year in 1910-1919 to 7 in 1944 and few cases have since been reported.

In 1942 the City Planning Commission adopted a Master Plan of Health Center Districts and Locations of Buildings. Under this plan the city is divided into thirty health districts, each with a population of about 250,000 and with a District Health Center in each. These centers house clinics, child health stations, nursing offices, health education units, and other services geared to the needs of the neighborhoods served.

In co-operation with the Board of Education, the health of children in the schools is checked regularly and corrective treatment provided when it is needed. There is a special division for handicapped children. The test of these measures and facilities is to be found in the vital statistics. An all-time low in the death rate of infants under one year—in 1942—was 28.8 out of 1,000 live births, whereas the lowest general death rate in the city's history—in 1941—was 9.9 per 1,000.

The Department of Health spent \$39,391,833 in 1945-46 and had a personnel

of 10,357. In the same period the Department of Hospitals had a budget of \$36,216,072 and 21,241 employees.

Closely related to the public health is the work of the Department of Sanitation, charged with the daily task of sweeping and cleaning 4,000 miles of streets, collecting 3,400 truckloads of garbage, ashes, and rubbish, and removing snow and ice from the streets. The jobs employ about 15,000 men and 3,500 pieces of equipment. There is a Master Plan for this department which shows the districts and the locations of existing and planned incinerators, waterfront disposal stations, garages, and other buildings.

The big problem of the Department of Sanitation is the disposal of the 50,000 cubic yards of waste it collects daily. Formerly much of this material was taken out to sea and dumped, but so much of it washed back on the New Jersey beaches that the Supreme Court put a ban on this method of disposal. Another means of disposal was to use the garbage and waste to fill in low land and land under water in areas remote from built-up sections. Some fine waterfront parks have been created in this way, and three immense new parks are now being formed—Soundview Park in The Bronx, Marine Park in Brooklyn, and Great Kills in Richmond.

The difficulty with this solution is that there are few areas left in Greater New York where such operations can be carried on. The method is to scoop out ditches, usually in sandy or marsh land, and cover the disposal material with soil as soon as it is dumped. When properly carried out this method is not offensive, but the work is not always done in the right way and as a result the city authorities are often faced with something like rebellion on the part of residents in the vicinity of these "land fills." In some instances raising the land level has interfered with natural drainage, thus causing flooding in sections where streets are below the required levels. During the war, when the city lacked proper equipment, covering the raw garbage was delayed and offensive odors, plagues of rats, and other obnoxious results brought complaints. In Richmond, where operations at Great Kills were bad during the war, there was a threat of secession from New York City if another land fill was started. But such controversies are forgotten when parks emerge in areas that were once swamp lands and attractive home neighborhoods develop. The city has about reached the end of its land-fill possibilities, however, and has resumed construction of destructor plants. These also bring protests, but incinerators offer the only solution of getting rid of the city's refuse and garbage.

Problems of the same nature are encountered in connection with sewage disposal. During most of the city's existence the sewers simply drained into the nearest body of water. As the volume of sewage increased, not only from the city sewers but also from other communities whose sewers drained into the streams emptying into New York Bay, pollution became a health menace. It

is estimated that a billion gallons of sewage is generated daily in New York. Such a volume would fill Fifth Avenue, from 110th Street to Washington Square, up to the fifth floors of buildings.

In 1935 New York State, New Jersey, and Connecticut, by treaty, set up the Interstate Sanitation Commission to abate pollution in the waters in the metropolitan district. The problem is gigantic, since the only solution is the construction of expensive sewage-treatment plants. A comprehensive program was developed and considerable progress was made after 1935, when the first modern sewage-treatment plant was opened at Coney Island. Plants were established on Ward's Island, Tallman's Island, Bowery Bay, and Jamaica Bay, and others were planned at a cost of over \$150,000,000. The problem of financing this huge program remained unsolved in 1948. The plants erected and planned conform to a Master Plan of Sewage-Treatment sites and Tributary Areas adopted by the Planning Commission.² With the completion of this program the waters around New York will be free of pollution, which means that boating and bathing will revive and shore property will be enhanced in value. Dumping from ships and the discharge of other wastes is strictly regulated, and the waters are policed not only by the city harbor squad but also by the Army, which controls the Port District. The Supervisor of the Port, who operates about a dozen patrol boats, is a naval officer who reports to the Secretary of War.

Control of disease involves vigilant inspection of ships—both cargoes and passengers—as well as airplanes from foreign countries. During the war a special Tropical Disease Diagnostic Service was established by the Health Department. Milk is literally followed from cows to consumers—3,500,000 quarts a day, which would make a stretch of bottles reaching 225 miles.

New York could not exist without an almost magical supply of water, and the health of the community would be endangered if this water failed in volume or in purity. Getting enough good water has been a problem ever since the town grew above Wall Street and the "Tea Water Pump" was the chief source of drinkable water for a large area. The Croton water system, with its reservoir where the Public Library now stands, was opened in 1842. Before that reservoir was removed it was supplemented by the new Croton system, which now furnishes 510 million gallons a day.

It soon became apparent, however, that this would not meet the needs of the growing city. Eventually the Catskill system, supplemented by the recently constructed Delaware aqueduct, more than doubled the available supply. The second stage of the Delaware system, which reaches 125 miles into Delaware County will assure a dependable supply of 1,525,000,000 gallons a day. The

² There was a storm of protest and a lawsuit over the proposal to locate a treatment plant at Owl's Head, in Brooklyn, where engineering studies indicated that one was needed.

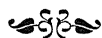
Delaware aqueduct is cut through solid rock from 300 to 1,000 feet underground and, with the city tunnel, is 102 miles long. It passes under the Hudson above Newburgh, after crossing part of New Jersey. New York City has about \$1,000,000,000 invested in its water supply.

The city's water is distributed by the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, which has the duty of policing the water sheds and otherwise preventing pollution. As a part of this task the department in the upstate watershed maintains and operates seven sewage-disposal plants where sewage is treated before it enters streams that flow into reservoirs. Others are being planned. It has some 120 chlorine plants in the area. During the war a regiment of soldiers guarded the city's water supply.

The Department of Markets is also an important factor in protecting the city's health. One of the picturesque features of New York, until a few years ago, were the pushcart markets. At one time there were fifty-five of these markets and 7,500 pushcarts. Practically all of those markets have been put indoors, where vegetables and fruits and other foods are protected from flies and dirt. These small enclosed markets are merely local outlets. In addition the city operates a large terminal and Farmers' Market in Brooklyn, a Live Poultry Market in Queens, Washington Market and a meat center in Manhattan, and the Terminal Market in The Bronx. A new Wholesale Produce Market is planned to replace the obsolete market in lower Manhattan.

Part Seven: » NEW YORK'S
PERPETUAL HOUSING SHORTAGE

Chapter Thirty-one



Who Owns New York's Real Estate?

NEW YORK'S housing shortage dates from 1614, when Adriaen Block's ship, the "Tiger," burned in the bay. The crew swam ashore and built four log huts at what is now 39-41 Broadway. These first permanent buildings on Manhattan Island were fortress dwellings, designed for protection against the weather and Indians, and were called "block houses"—a term that became familiar in frontier America. Since that time there have never been enough dwellings in New York to house the constantly increasing population decently and comfortably at costs the masses could afford. Deplorable living conditions have existed in many parts of the city at all times, mostly because of overbuilding on land, the overcrowding of buildings, and other abuses.

Nevertheless, most of the people who have come to live in New York, whether they were poor immigrants from Europe, Negroes from the South, or Puerto Ricans arriving more recently by airplane, have occupied better dwellings than they ever had before. The unsolved problem has been to provide housing fast enough to take care of the growth and shifts of population, to overcome obsolescence, and to conform to steadily rising standards.

Building in New York has always been spasmodic, whereas obsolescence is continuous and cumulative. Dwellings deteriorate rapidly unless they are given proper care, and whole neighborhoods decline faster than individual structures. Large sections of New York suffer from the evils of greedy absentee landlords and indifferent or destructive tenants, lack of essential public improvements, poor planning, and the lack of appropriate regulations.

Individual home ownership has steadily increased but has always been beyond the means of most of the people. The raising of housing standards is made difficult by land and building costs in New York, which have always been relatively higher than elsewhere. New York has the finest and most comprehensive rapid transit of any large city, but it has never been adequate,

and transit extensions have aggravated the city's problems by spreading and shifting populations. Regulation of land and building by the government, which is largely dependent on real estate taxes, has been a continuing problem ever since Nieuw Amsterdam was settled.

New York's first congestion was caused by the influx of settlers from outlying sections who during Indian outbreaks sought the protection of the fort and later of the palisades at Wall Street. When these refugees asked for building lots, Peter Stuyvesant ordered a survey "without regard to persons, gardens, or places," and lots that trenched on land already disposed of were appraised and distributed to petitioners on condition that they recompense the former owners, if any, or else build on the land.

Stuyvesant later became dissatisfied with conditions and ordered that vacant lots be taxed a fifteenth penny, the money to be applied to the cost of fortifications. If owners did not like the valuations fixed by the burgomasters, they could fix values themselves and either pay taxes or sell the lots on this basis, the tax to continue until buildings were constructed.

Under the Dongan and Montgomery charters the City of New York was granted all the land in Manhattan not previously alienated. There were a few large holdings, such as Trinity Church and some farms and estates, but in 1789, when New York became the national capital, the common lands comprised about 11,000 out of a total of about 14,000 acres.¹ Faced with the expense of providing quarters for the new Federal government, the city sold for farms some 275 acres of land north of 32nd Street and east of Broadway for about \$70 an acre. The area between the Post and Bloomingdale (Broadway) roads was divided into parcels of five acres each, leaving "a middle road between." Purchasers were required to pay 10 per cent in ten days and were given five years to complete payments, with interest at 5 per cent.

Little of the remaining common land could be divided into five-acre parcels, since it did not front on existing roads. The land in what is now Midtown was mostly hilly and rocky and of little use for farming. Fifty acres north of 57th Street were sold in 1792 for \$30 an acre. Selling land at such prices did not benefit the city. The land was not improved for years and purchasers often defaulted on payments.

In order to stimulate building the city then tried selling and leasing alternate lots. Of 58 lots sold in 1796, the purchasers of 26 failed to claim them and they were resold in 1801 at a 40 per cent discount. Next, the city sold new leases at auction on condition that brick buildings with at least two stories and a garret be built on them. Although the city was growing fast and the need for housing

¹ George Ashton Black, *The History of Municipal Ownership of Land on Manhattan Island, to the Beginning of Sales by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund in 1844* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1897).

was serious, building was slow. Then, as now, most New Yorkers could not afford to buy or pay the rent on new buildings.

Lack of transportation was another factor, since most workers were employed on the lower East Side. The greatest handicap to building was the lack of streets to provide access to land already sold and to open up more of the common land. The continuing housing shortage and the city's need for additional revenue to provide essential improvements caused Governor De Witt Clinton, in 1807, to appoint Gouverneur Morris, Simeon DeWitt, and John Rutherford Commissioners of Streets and Roads, to draw up a street plan for the city.

The Commission did not report until 1811, when it presented its plan for the resulting gridiron street system. This much derided plan caused considerable controversy at the time, primarily because the commissioners, after trying to make the streets conform to existing property lines, finally imposed the rigid gridiron pattern of streets, regardless of topography, and compelled owners to conform to it. The opening of streets was delayed for years because of controversies, and it was not until 1836 that most of the difficulties were adjusted by the swapping of lots.²

Much of the common land, which the city virtually gave away, passed into the hands of John Jacob Astor. Astor was still selling musical instruments and furs at 81 Queen Street in 1789, when he bought two lots on Bowery Lane for about \$625. He was soon buying more lots on Broadway and along side streets, keeping ahead of the northward trend in population. But Astor did not neglect the waterfront. He received grants of city land on Mangin Street and along South Street. These early water grants involved filling and draining, but they soon became some of the most valuable property in the city. Astor showed the same astuteness and vision as a real estate investor that he had displayed in opening up his trading routes in the wilderness.

Foreseeing the inevitable growth of New York, Astor bought what was then inaccessible, unproductive land in the center of the island, as well as swamps and land under water on both sides. He sold and traded property, but for the most part he sought to lease the land and let others make the improvements. The full story of how Astor benefited from the city's policy of selling common land and its adoption of the gridiron street system has never been told, but the results are still apparent in the Astor holdings in Manhattan.³

One of Astor's biggest bargains was the purchase of the Medee Eden farm, running from Bloomingdale Road (Broadway), diagonally between what are now 42nd and 46th Streets, to the Hudson, for \$25,000. He bought the John

² For more details on New York City as a landlord see Cleveland Rodgers, *New York Plans for the Future* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943).

³ Arthur D. Howden Smith, *John Jacob Astor* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1929).

Cosine farm, from Broadway to the Hudson and from 53rd to 57th Streets, for \$23,000. The East Side farm and rope walk of John Senlar cost Astor \$20,000; he got two-thirds of Governor Clinton's large country place in Greenwich Village cheap; and when Aaron Burr got into trouble Astor took the Trinity lease of Richmond Hill off his hands and subleased lots at a huge profit.

The Thompson farm, east and west of Fifth Avenue between 32nd and 36th Streets, was later bought by Astor's son, William. It is estimated that John Jacob Astor invested some \$2,000,000 in Manhattan real estate. When he died, in 1848, his holdings were valued at \$20,000,000. By 1905 the value of these properties was put at \$450,000,000. Since that time it has been impossible to trace the upward spiral of values on the original Astor holdings. Cutting Manhattan into blocks, with cross streets every 200 feet and with 100-foot avenues and a few 100-foot east-west thoroughfares, transformed the farms and estates on Manhattan into the most valuable real estate in the world, but it has been a real handicap in replanning the city.

As early as 1734 the city stopped selling its waterfront land in lower Manhattan, substituting an annual rental, which was equivalent to a flexible tax and far more productive than land sales. Had the city adhered to its policy of retaining and leasing alternating lots, its subsequent financial troubles would have been averted. Under the Ordinance of 1844, however, the city in the next twenty years sold all of the common lands not then reserved for public purposes. The money received for this land went to defray current expenses and to pay off debt. Yet the city's debt, which was \$13,000,000 in 1844, had risen to \$36,000,000 by 1869, and by 1875 the debt had been boosted to \$120,000,000 during the reign of Boss Tweed.

Next to the city itself, Trinity Church was the largest owner of Manhattan land after the Revolution. The original West India Company farm, later known successively as the Duke's Farm, King's Farm, and Queen's Farm, passed to Trinity Church in 1705. Later the Annetje Jans Bogardus farm and another parcel south of the church were added, thus giving Trinity holdings that reached almost from the church to Greenwich Village, east of Broadway.⁴

Part of this land was given to King's College (later Columbia College) and is now known as the Lower Estate of Columbia University. It is estimated to be worth \$10,000,000. Rockefeller Center stands on land known as the Upper Estate of Columbia University, for which the University receives ground rent of \$3,000,000 a year. These two estates make Columbia one of the biggest New York landlords. Although Trinity Church has made many grants of land to churches, missions, and other institutions and has sold some of its land, it still owns taxable property worth over \$100,000,000.

⁴ Arthur Pound, *The Golden Earth* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935).

Another large owner of revenue-producing land is Sailors' Snug Harbor, established in 1806 by Captain Robert Randall in memory of his father. Robert Randall left his house and some twenty-two acres "seeded to grass" as a site for a home for "aged, decrepit, and worn-out sailors." The land was around Broadway and Astor Place and extended westward to Washington Square. By 1817 the land had become so valuable that the trustees sought to locate the sailors' home elsewhere. It was eleven years before such permission was granted and Sailors' Snug Harbor was established on Staten Island. In the interval determined efforts were made to break the Randall will, drawn by Alexander Hamilton, but it was finally upheld by the United States Supreme Court in 1830. The property was valued at about \$20,000 when Robert Randall died.

With the extension of Broadway the frontage on that street became extremely valuable, and A. T. Stewart leased a block on which the old building of Wanamaker's store now stands. Since that time all of the Snug Harbor property has soared in value. Hendrick Brevoort's orchard was at Tenth Street and Broadway, and he had a fine large tree at the corner under which he often sat. When the northward extension of Broadway was started in 1836 this tree stood in the way of the proposed street line. Brevoort made such violent protest that the lines were changed and Broadway curved to the west instead of following the line of the present Fourth Avenue. Also because of Brevoort's objections, Eleventh Street was never cut through between Broadway and Fourth Avenue.

The Brevoort property was saved for a while, and the altered lines of Broadway created a fine vista when Grace Church was built on the site in 1846 from plans by James Renwick, Jr., the twenty-three-year-old grandson of Hendrick Brevoort. The costs were originally estimated at \$60,000 but were raised before the church was completed.⁵

In 1846 Fifth Avenue was a bumpy, unpaved road above Eighteenth Street, and Union Square was considered too far uptown by the site committee of Grace Church. The area around Astor Place, however, was already fashionable.

⁵ Philip Hone, in his diary under the date of February 5, 1846, said: "The new church at the head of Broadway is nearly finished and ready for consecration. The pews were sold last week and brought extravagant prices, some \$1,200 to \$1,400, with a pew rent on the estimated value at eight per cent; so that the word of God, as it came down to us from fishermen and mechanics, will cost the quality who worship in this splendid temple about three dollars every Sunday."

Walt Whitman wrote with even more feeling in the *Brooklyn Eagle*: "We don't see how it is possible for people to worship God there. It is a place where the world, and the world's traits, and the little petty passions and weaknesses of human nature, seem to be as broad blown and flush as upon the Exchange in Wall Street, Broadway or any mart of trade, of a week day." Quoted from *The Gathering of the Forces*, a collection of Walt Whitman's writings as editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, edited by Cleveland Rodgers and John Black (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920).

John Jacob Astor had purchased the Jacob Sperry nursery and greenhouse, about three acres, on Bowery Lane around the present Astor Place. His son, William, had a mansion there in 1845, and later the original Astor Library was built on part of the property. The origins of the Astor fortune are recalled by panels in the Astor Place subway station showing the industrious beaver at work.

About 1818 Peter Cooper bought an unexpired lease on six or eight lots at Fourth Avenue and Eighth Street, just opposite Cooper Union. He ran a grocery store on the corner, where his wife baked "the best bread in New York," and he built four frame houses which he rented. Later he bought the land on which Cooper Union now stands. John Jacob Astor and Washington Irving occupied houses in Colonnade Row on Lafayette Street (still standing in 1948), where Julia Gardiner and President Tyler were married. Across the street the Astor Library was to rise in 1854. The Astor Place Opera House, the Academy of Music (1854), and the New York Society Library were all near by.

Although the holdings of the descendants of John Gottlieb Wendel, another German fur dealer and merchant, were small compared with those of the Astors, they were considerable. He and Astor married sisters. John D. Wendel, son of Gottlieb, died in 1859, leaving \$3,000,000. John G. Wendel, 2nd, never married and tried to keep his sisters from doing so. One of the sisters did become Mrs. Swope; another, Augusta, was declared incompetent; and a third, Georgiana, went to a sanitarium. When the last of the eccentric Wendel family, Ella, died in 1936, she left an estate valued at \$30,000,000, mostly in Manhattan real estate. Like her six sisters and one brother, Ella was born, lived, and died in the old brownstone house at Fifth Avenue and 39th Street. It was at this address that the Wendels' dog enjoyed his run in a yard which had an assessed value of \$1,410,000.

Peter Goelet, who ran a hardware store in Hanover Square, bought a wharf and yard on Exchange Slip that were used by market boats. When the slip was filled in, he got a good profit and invested in a farm fronting on Broadway (Bloomingdale Road) north of Fourteenth Street. His sons later bought ahead of developments in Midtown, and with the opening of Fifth Avenue their fortunes grew. In 1930 four descendants of Ogden and Robert Goelet were estimated to be worth \$200,000,000.

William and Frederick Rhineland, who kept a bakery on William Street before the Revolution, started a sugar factory and leased and later bought land from Trinity Church which became prime business property. William Rhineland, who died in 1907, left an estate of \$50,000,000. Mrs. William Rhineland was descended from Anthony Rutgers, who had realized the value of the street plan initiated in 1807 and bought outlying land.

Peter Schermerhorn, a contemporary of John Jacob Astor, a hundred years ago, owned a large tract of land along the East River from 64th Street to 75th Street

and extending inland to Third Avenue, and in 1830 John M. Bixby, a young lawyer, gave a note for \$200 when he bought a Murray Hill farm situated between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and 39th and 40th Streets.

The processes by which ownership of Manhattan passed from the city to private owners, and its subsequent exploitation, do not differ greatly from those by which the continent was opened up by the national government. But after disposing of most of its public land, the Federal government left the subsequent development to the states and to private enterprise. New York City had to foster the development of the land, because it had to depend on real estate taxes to pay the expenses of local government.

In a sense the city is still the landlord not only of Manhattan but of Greater New York as well. The city had to buy back about a third of the land for street and park purposes, and it still pays more than the assessed value for land for public purposes. But taxes are a first lien on all real estate, and if taxes are not paid the city takes back the property. The city's interest, therefore, is no less vital today than when it held title to most of Manhattan.

Today New York is being replanned and rebuilt on a different pattern. The gridiron plan provided a maximum number of small lots, on which individual owners built structures occupying practically all of the plots. In the beginning, buildings were low. As they became larger and higher they took the light and air from adjacent property and created congestion in the streets. Steel construction and modern demands ultimately led to the erection of buildings occupying whole blocks or more than one block.

Superblocks, requiring the closing of streets, are now necessary to overcome the conditions imposed by the old gridiron. This is especially true in housing developments, but it also applies to other projects. The 200-foot blocks in Manhattan, despite their length, do not permit the building of an auditorium large enough to meet present-day requirements. Madison Square Garden represents the maximum, and it seats only 20,000.

Redevelopment of the older parts of New York was retarded for years because of the rigidities of the street system and the small lots in individual ownership. Rockefeller Center was made possible by the fact that Columbia University owned a large tract of land in Midtown. But it did not own all the frontage, especially on the Avenue of the Americas, and "hold-outs" exist at certain corners. There are many conspicuous hold-outs in New York, notably at Herald Square, where the owner of a small corner parcel refused to sell to round out Macy's mammoth store.

Subdivision into small lots has turned New York's land into a vast roulette table. Individuals and corporations have placed their money on numbered lots and continue to pay taxes on them, in the hope that with the turn of the wheel of fortune the ball will drop on their lot or in their block and it will be wanted

for an Empire State Building or some such structure. Such hopes have created "floating values" that have put owners and the city at the mercy of conditions over which there is no control.

Since New York could not be redeveloped on a lot or even on a block basis, ways had to be found to get control of large parcels of land. This required a great deal of money, but getting control of the necessary land was the first essential. The New York Central-Park Avenue development, the Pennsylvania Station, Rockefeller Center, the Empire State Building, and other big developments either grew out of large land holdings or had the advantage of the government's condemning the property needed. The United Nations site became available because most of it had been assembled over a long period, but it was necessary to condemn certain parcels and to close streets. Condemnation will be necessary to assure a suitable development around the site, and exercise of the powers of eminent domain can only be exercised for public purposes.

A great forward step was taken when it was recognized that clearing slums and providing decent housing were governmental concerns and that condemnation of private property for such purposes was justified. This radical change is so new that its effects on New York have not yet been generally realized. The Federal courts have cast doubt on the legality of condemning property for public housing projects, but New York State has removed such doubt by specific constitutional and legislative action.

Making it possible for the city to condemn property for certain kinds of housing removed the first barrier to better housing and to the redevelopment of many sections of New York on a new and greatly improved pattern. This new kind of city, with new designs for urban living, is rapidly coming into being.

With the increase in realty values, especially in Manhattan, and the replacement of old buildings with larger and higher structures requiring more capital, there has been a radical shift in ownership and control of the bulk of Manhattan's real estate. Many more people have a stake in New York than ever before, but few of these owners know that they have such an interest.

In 1943 Carlisle Davidson, of the Real Estate Board of New York, made a survey to ascertain who owns New York. The assessed values of that year showed that property valued at \$2,359,385,910 was owned by the city, state, and Federal governments, \$502,129,500 by religious and charitable institutions, and \$724,892,660 by public utilities, in which the savings of individuals are invested by banks and insurance companies.

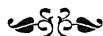
First mortgages represent 60 per cent of the value of most New York property, so that holders of mortgages are the chief owners of the city. Mr. Carlisle analyzed a whole block in Manhattan—the one bounded by Sixth and Seventh avenues and by West 57th and West 58th streets. This land originally belonged to the city and was probably sold for farming at \$30 an acre. The total assessed

value of the thirty-one parcels, with almost every kind of building, was \$13,168,500. Counting the policyholders in insurance companies, the members of organizations, and other mortgage holders, including Robert College in Istanbul, Turkey, he found that 31,550,993 persons had a direct interest in this block.⁶

From the record, it seems clear enough that so far as real property is concerned New York is a collective enterprise in which all its people have a stake. Recognition of this fact and efforts to implement the public interest have been slow, but much progress has been made in recent years. The continuing housing problem is largely a land problem, involving more effective controls over land and its uses.

⁶ *Real Estate Forum*, February, 1947.

Chapter Thirty-two



The Revolt against New York Slums

IT IS ironic that New York City was virtually giving away its most valuable land at a time when housing conditions were at their worst. The city still has a critical housing shortage but it has been doing something about housing and slums for a hundred years. The real story is a progress report.

The Dutch built solidly and well, along the canal and the waterfront at first, and the fact that their structures were erected above the ground to protect the lower floors from rising water explains the high stoops that are still so much in evidence. The original buildings in lower Manhattan stood close together facing the street, but they were on relatively deep lots. Into the back part of the lots, in time, were crowded the old "tenant houses," with entrances through narrow passages between the structures in front of them. These dark, miserable shelters constituted some of the worst housing New York ever had, and they existed side by side—or back to back—with the more substantial buildings.

In time those who could afford to do so built pretentious dwellings in such restricted sections as St. John's Park, Gramercy Park, and Tompkins and Stuyvesant squares, in Greenwich Village, on Brooklyn Heights, and along Broadway and the new avenues and cross streets as they were gradually opened up. On the west side, Anthony Rutgers reclaimed the marsh land, where his son-in-law, Leonard Lispenard, developed some seventy acres. Shipping, ship-building, and commerce caused the population to concentrate along the lower East Side, but Collect Pond and the surrounding marsh land long constituted a serious obstacle to development in the center of the island north of City Hall.

An early work-relief project was the final draining of Collect Pond and the filling in of the surrounding area. Some of the land was sold cheap, and numerous taverns and other flimsy buildings were erected. For a brief time the section was a recreational center, but the continual sinking of the filled land

caused the buildings to be abandoned to freed slaves, poor immigrants, and others who could find no better place in which to live.

This was the origin of the infamous Paradise Square and Five Points, Mulberry Bend, and other hang-outs of the notorious Dead Rabbits, Shirt Tails, Forty Thieves, Plug Uglies, and other gangs. Charles Dickens in his *American Notes* described the "Den of Thieves," where more than seventy-five men and women lived under the most revolting conditions. "The Old Brewery" was another den of the same kind. By 1850 the preachers, legislators, editors, and health officials began to arouse the community to the dangerous conditions in the slums. Epidemics and plagues were traced to damp cellar bedrooms and leaky attics where sick and well were crowded together in dark vermin-infested rooms, and vice and crime were rampant in the swarming neighborhoods.

It was half a century before Jacob Riis published his *How the Other Half Lives*, and the reform movement was slow in getting under way. Meantime dumbbell and railroad types of tenements were being constructed. Plans for the first dumbbell tenements won a competition in 1879 for the best design for a tenement on a 25 x 100 lot. These, although they enabled landlords to jam more people into small space, were regarded as model housing for workers when they replaced the railroad flats, tenant houses, and shacks.

Long before the first East River bridge was built, Brooklyn offered the quickest escape from Manhattan slums. Walt Whitman, then a Brooklyn editor, had a keen interest in this problem and had helped his father build numerous small houses there. Walt was convinced that there was a general objection among people "to living with another family, or indeed, any approach to the tenement house system, and what they demand is small, neat, convenient and cheap houses which will come comfortably within the scope of their means, while insuring to them the advantages of a good and respectable neighborhood. Let the hint be taken and the voice of the people heard, as it will be and must be in the end."¹

Alfred T. White, of Brooklyn, was a pioneer in developing a greatly improved type of tenement. Mr. White was educated as an engineer at Brooklyn and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institutes, but joined his father's importing firm in 1865. In 1872 he went to London and there studied some new tenements featuring outside stairways. In 1876 he built his first block of houses in Brooklyn and completed the Riverside Tower and Homes projects just off Brooklyn Heights. Mr. White also erected three hundred one- and two-family houses of an improved type. The experience gained from these experiments, as recorded in three books—*Improved Dwellings for Laboring People* (1879), *Better Homes*

¹ Editorial in the *Brooklyn Times*, May 13, 1858, quoted in *I Sit and Look Out*, by Walt Whitman, selected and edited by Emory Holloway and Vernolian Schwarz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932).

for *Working People* (1885), and *Sun-lighted Tenements; 35 Years' Experience as an Owner* (1912)—was an important factor in the enactment of new tenement legislation in 1895 and later. Mr. White was an independent in politics, but Republican Mayor Charles A. Schieren appointed him Commissioner of Public Works in 1893, which office he administered efficiently. He was a moving spirit in establishing the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities and the Children's Aid Society and was active in Negro education. He gave \$300,000 to Howard University and was a supporter of Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. In 1921, at the age of seventy-five, while skating alone on a small lake at Harriman State Park, Mr. White broke through the ice and was drowned.

The White projects paid 5 per cent, thus demonstrating that better housing for "laboring people" could be built at a profit. The White tenements were still profitable in 1948. Remodeled in 1936, they were always occupied and, because of their design and efficient management, did not deteriorate rapidly. In addition to outside stairways and other features new at the time, the White tenements occupied only 50 per cent of the land, and this was a primary factor in maintaining their attractiveness. Another pioneer in housing reform was A. T. Stewart, the New York merchant. Inspired by Robert Owen and Ebenezer Howard and by British proposals for garden cities, Stewart bought a tract of land in Hempstead Plains and started Garden City, Long Island.

As housing conditions became worse in lower Manhattan, mansions multiplied along the avenues. About 1856 a group of fashionable houses was built by members of the Phelps-Dodge firm and other bankers on Murray Hill. The Stokes house, at 219 Madison Avenue, was later bought by J. P. Morgan, who acquired adjacent property during the years and built the Morgan Library next door. His former residence now houses the national administrative offices of a Lutheran organization. Madison Avenue ended at 42nd Street in those days, and the Harlem Rail Road operated on Fourth Avenue. A group of residences was built by Henry Villard farther up Madison before his railroad empire collapsed. One of these units, known as the Whitelaw Reid mansion, was used during the war as headquarters for the "Waves."

Dr. Felix Adler, of the Ethical Culture Society, and I. N. Seligman erected a model tenement on Cherry Street in 1885, and in 1887 the Tenement House Building Company built model dwellings at 338-344 Cherry Street. Later, Jacob Riis led a successful crusade to turn part of the notorious Paradise Square into Columbus Park; that marked the beginning of the transformation of the old Collect Pond area into Foley Square.

The Tenement House Law of 1900, adopted after half a century of agitation, was a most important forward step up to that time in improving housing conditions in the city. Robert W. de Forest, the chairman of the Tenement House Commission, and Lawrence Veiller, its secretary, were successful in outlawing

future dumbbell and railroad flats, but some half million persons still live in the 50,000 old-law tenements remaining in the city in 1948. The records show that, between 1919 and 1934, deaths from tuberculosis, diptheria, typhoid, and spinal meningitis were twice as great in these old-law structures as in the new-law tenements. From 1911 to 1936 there were 1,138 deaths from fire in the old-law as compared with 271 in the new-law tenements, although the latter had increased from 235,000 to 907,000 and over 100,000 old-law tenements had been demolished.²

During Greater New York's first decade efforts were made by philanthropists and others to relieve the housing situation and to improve living conditions. Henry Phipps set up a revolving fund of \$1,000,000 and built several model projects, two of them for Negroes. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., financed the Paul Lawrence Dunbar Apartments in Harlem, which failed and were sold in 1939. The Russell Sage Foundation in 1909 started Forest Hills Gardens as a model community for workers of moderate means. This well-planned and well-regulated project was so successful that it soon attracted well-to-do people, and the Gardens developed as an exclusive community of expensive homes, high-class apartments, and a hotel.

There were many imitations of Forest Hills Gardens in the outlying sections of the city, and more pretentious developments such as Fieldston in The Bronx, Jamaica Estates, and others were started. People of means had long before escaped from crowded Manhattan by moving to the suburbs. A colony of tenant-owned garden apartments was developed at Jackson Heights in 1913 by the J. G. White Company, from plans by Andrew J. Thomas.

With the gridiron street system firmly established, the well-to-do built brownstone dwellings on the avenues and along cross streets in the more desirable parts of Manhattan. The first brownstone mansions were pretentious, but the brownstone fronts that soon became dominant were the result of the discovery in near-by Connecticut and New Jersey of large quantities of soft brown sandstone that could be easily and cheaply quarried and transported to the areas where housing shortages were chronic. Rows of these brownstone houses, identical in size and design, could be quickly built, and there was a persistent demand for them. They were almost literally made and sold like the hot cakes they resemble in color and lack of individuality. Monotonous in appearance and with a minimum of ground space, light, and air, they could nevertheless be readily heated by hot-air furnaces and were a great improvement over the housing that preceded them in New York.

Of course the masses of immigrant workers who poured through Castle Garden and Ellis Island did not live in these dwellings when they were new. As separate homes, the ordinary brownstone house could be quite comfortable,

² Charles Abrams, *The Future of Housing* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947).

but when converted into rooming houses and multiple dwellings—the fate of so many of them—they became in some respects worse than the old-law tenements, though they could not house so many people in a given block or neighborhood.

As tenements became taller and taller, until the walls could not support more floors, health and building officials called a halt. The main objections at first were not to the overcrowding or to the generally insanitary conditions but to the strain put upon the hearts of tenants, especially those of old people, who had to climb the stairs. But there was faulty building at times; walls collapsed, and the fire hazards were great.

New York's first apartment house was the Stuyvesant, erected in 1869 at 140-146 East Eighteenth Street. It was built by Rutherford Stuyvesant when he was only twenty-six years old, and Richard M. Hunt, the architect, patterned it on apartments then in vogue in Paris. Thereafter New Yorkers could live in "French apartments" without being confused with the denizens of the tenements.

Manhattan's population reached a peak of 2,330,000 in 1910. The opening of the new bridges over the East River and the first subways and extensions of transit lines into The Bronx and Queens quickly siphoned a large section of the population into these boroughs, and commuting to Westchester, New Jersey, and Nassau County increased. For the first time in her long history, there was no housing shortage in Manhattan; but in the other boroughs of Greater New York, as their populations increased, shortages became apparent there.

A chart prepared by the Lawyers Title Corporation, showing a century of booms and depressions in Manhattan real estate, records the first slump in values following the panic of 1907. This continued until 1917. Thereafter, with only slight recessions in 1922 and 1926, values continued to rise steeply until 1930. The drop at that time carried values down almost to the 1917 mark, when skyscraper building had begun.

The First World War greatly aggravated the housing situation. A group of Finns built a co-operative project in Brooklyn in 1916, the first venture of this kind; but there was a virtual cessation of building during the war, and at its close there was a tremendous pent-up demand for shelter of all kinds. The war had brought prosperity to New York, and an increase in savings, an increase in women workers, and cheap automobiles were all factors in stimulating the demand for new houses, especially in outlying areas. In Manhattan one of the notable developments was Tudor City, built by the Fred F. French Company in 1920. This project, consisting of twelve buildings from ten to thirty-two stories high, is at 42nd Street and First Avenue, overlooking the United Nations site. In the same year, the Paterno Brothers built Hudson View Gardens, a co-operative project on Riverside Drive near 181st Street, and apartments began replacing old mansions on Riverside Drive, Fifth Avenue, and other famous streets.

Although government had done something to raise standards and philanthropy

had contributed a few low-rent projects, housing was otherwise left to private enterprise. The government, however, stimulated building by offering tax exemption in 1921, with results that left much to be desired. Speculative builders and owners of land took advantage of the offer of exempting dwellings from taxation for a term of years, and acres of flimsy houses were built in the suburbs, as well as some luxury apartments in the city, including the Park Avenue area.

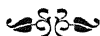
More constructive efforts were made by the state following the election of Alfred E. Smith as Governor in 1918. His Reconstruction Commission, and especially the Commission on Housing and Regional Planning, which included Henry Wright and Clarence Stein, made detailed analyses and recommendations for slum clearance and low-cost housing. On February 26, 1926, a State Housing Board was created and empowered to form corporations to build dwellings that would be tax-exempt for twenty years. Dividends were not to exceed 6 per cent, and maximum rents were set at \$12.50 per room in Manhattan and \$11.00 elsewhere. Fourteen projects totaling \$29,300,000 in cost were built under this law up to the time tax exemption was ended by Mayor LaGuardia in 1938.

New York's building boom in the twenties was the greatest in its history. New apartments were erected in all parts of the city. In Manhattan, high-class apartments and apartment hotels were greatly multiplied. In 1930 Frank Mandel built London Terrace, one of the largest apartment houses in the world, occupying the long block on West 23rd Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues and replacing picturesque old London Terrace and Chelsea Cottages, groups of homes which had been fashionable in the last century. Castle Village, another large rental development by the Paterno Brothers, was built in 1939-41 overlooking the Hudson above 181st Street.

Most of the new housing was better than the old, yet, except for the rows of cheap, tax-exempt houses in the suburbs, practically nothing was done to provide better dwellings for the lower-income groups living in slums. Significant exceptions were the Amalgamated Dwellings in The Bronx, erected by the Clothing Workers' Union, and the Amalgamated Houses on Grand Street, the latter financed by Herbert H. Lehman and Aaron Rabinowitz.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company provided the mortgage money for the Amalgamated project in The Bronx. In 1922 a law was passed permitting life insurance companies to invest in housing projects otherwise than in first mortgages, and the Metropolitan began its development in Long Island City, on which it received tax exemption for ten years and in which the rentals were limited to \$7.00 a room. This marked an important change in government policy and was to lead to a vast extension in housing financed by insurance companies and savings banks. It was not until the Great Depression, however, that the real revolution in housing got under way.

Chapter Thirty-three



Using the People's Money to House Them

PUBLIC housing as we know it today was initiated by Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal in 1933. Under the National Industrial Recovery Act \$123,000,000 was provided for slum clearance and low-cost housing. The first New York project to get approval in 1933 was Knickerbocker Village, on the lower East Side. Fred F. French, a Pulitzer scholar, trained for the ministry, and builder of Tudor City, had assembled land for a similar project in that area, which included the infamous "lung block." The land had cost \$15.13 a square foot, and the scheme had been halted by the depression.

Alfred E. Smith, who was born near by, went to Washington with members of the State Emergency Commission, headed by Robert Moses, and helped persuade the Public Works Administration and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to finance the development as a slum-clearance and low-rent project to rent for \$12.50 a room. The French Company was still amortizing the mortgage and had made no profit on its investment by 1948. The PWA also financed Boulevard Gardens in Queens and Hillside Homes in The Bronx.

F. H. LaGuardia, who had just taken office as Mayor, was quick to take advantage of the opportunity to secure Federal money for slum clearance and low-rent housing. LaGuardia had read Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* while serving in the Adriatic, and he had long urged a public slum-clearance and housing program. Under the state's Municipal Housing Authorities Law, which he sponsored, LaGuardia created the New York City Housing Authority on February 20, 1934.

The first project undertaken by the Authority was First Houses, financed by Vincent Astor and Bernard Baruch. Vincent Astor turned over some old East Side tenements, and Civic Works Administration and Works Progress Administration labor was used to rehabilitate them. An important court decision upheld the condemnation of certain parcels needed to round out the project.

In 1935, a court decision in a Louisville, Kentucky, case, raised doubts as to the Federal government's right to condemn property for one segment of the population. Thereafter the city itself condemned the sites required for public housing projects. Though some legal points were still undecided, the city condemned a slum area in Brooklyn for Williamsburg Houses, financed and built directly by the Public Works Administration. The Williamsburg and Harlem projects are still owned by the Federal government and are operated under lease by the New York City Housing Authority.

The Red Hook, Queensbridge, Vladeck, South Jamaica, East River, and Kingsborough housing developments and Clason Point Gardens were built under the Federal Housing Act of 1937, the City Housing Authority entering into contracts with the Federal government to borrow 90 per cent of the cost. Later the first six Federal projects were refinanced, only 15 per cent of the costs remaining as a Federal loan.

Clason Point Gardens were financed entirely by bonds sold to private investors; Wallabout Houses, near the Navy Yard in Brooklyn, were built with Lanham Act funds; and Edwin Markham Houses, on Staten Island, were constructed under the Federal war housing program. Vladeck City Houses, the first municipally aided project in the country, were financed by borrowing the total cost of the project, \$1,350,000, from the Bowery Savings Bank, at 3.14 per cent interest and with the principal and interest guaranteed by the City of New York. The city paid subsidies out of taxes collected under the City Occupancy Tax Law adopted in 1938.

Meanwhile the State of New York took the lead among American commonwealths in supporting public housing. Under constitutional amendments and enabling legislation passed in 1939, the state embarked on a program for low-rent housing which included subsidized housing and the use of powers of condemnation to stimulate the redevelopment of blighted areas. State loans up to \$300,000,000 were authorized, and cities were permitted to borrow up to 2 per cent of the assessed valuations to subsidize public housing, remodel old multiple dwellings, use condemnation powers, and give tax exemption to limited-dividend and redevelopment companies. The first project to be financed by state funds was Fort Greene Houses, in Brooklyn.

Up to the beginning of the global war the Housing Authority had built and was operating fourteen projects, housing 17,039 families, at a cost of approximately \$90,417,000. When the war caused a cessation of most building except war housing, the New York City Housing Authority had plans for fourteen new projects, including eleven to be built with state aid, one Federally aided project, and two city-aided projects.

The Authority's functions are to clear slums and to provide decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families of low income who could not otherwise afford

them. About 50,000 substandard slum dwellings were demolished with the aid of WPA labor. More than 250,000 families applied for admission to the projects during the first ten years. Preference was given to those moved from the sites to make way for new buildings. Rents average \$25.36 a month for a four-room apartment. Almost 15 per cent of the tenants were Negroes, and about 60 per cent of all the tenants were native-born. In the projects 40 per cent of the population were children as compared with 21 per cent for the city as a whole. Most of the families lived on less than \$25 a week when they moved into the new housing. Before the war, if the income of a family of four rose to \$1,797 the family became ineligible and was required to move. These regulations were later modified.

Most of the apartments in the city projects accommodate from two to eight or nine persons, but some are specially designed for larger families and others for elderly people living alone. The rooms are of moderate size. The kitchens contain refrigerators and other modern equipment, and have dining alcoves. The bathrooms are equipped with standard fixtures, and there are incinerators, public laundries, parking spaces for baby carriages and wheel toys, and store rooms for trunks. Steam heat, hot water, gas, and electricity are furnished. All the buildings are fireproof, and in the high structures there are elevators.

All the projects have plenty of light and air, with play spaces, sitting parks, and protected walks. Schools, libraries, larger parks and playgrounds, health centers, and shopping centers are near most of the developments, and some projects have community buildings and swimming pools. Some of the public housing projects are occupied exclusively by Negroes; others have both white and colored tenants. There is no discrimination of any kind, although in some instances the Authority varies the rents on the basis of location, for even in subsidized public housing those in front apartments usually enjoy superior views.

With the ending of the war, the City Housing Authority became the agent of the state and Federal governments in providing emergency housing for veterans. Eleven projects, with a total of 10,255 apartments, were provided—mostly Quonset huts and prefabricated structures on vacant land in outlying sections. The total cost was \$43,000,000 of which the city put up \$10,000,000. The state provided about 2,000 temporary apartments.

Only one Federal project remained to be constructed in New York City at the end of the war and no additional Federal funds had been made available up to 1948. Meantime the state had become the chief source of public housing funds for use in the city. Failure of other communities to take full advantage of the state law made possible increased funds for New York City. A referendum in November, 1947, made an additional \$120,000,000 available for the city.

The New York City Housing Authority estimates that 272,720 units are still

needed to replace substandard dwellings in New York City. The total cost is placed at \$2,000,000,000 and the subsidies required at \$43,000,000 a year. This seems a large sum, but during the depression the Emergency Relief Bureau paid out \$30,000,000 a year for rent for families living in slums.

Public housing construction, which had been suspended during the war, when hostilities ceased was further retarded by shortages of material, rising costs of building, and other factors. One of the most serious handicaps was lack of cleared sites. Although a primary purpose of the public housing program was to clear slums, the shortage of housing precluded the demolition of dwellings, no matter how dilapidated, if they were usable. As a result, the plans of the Housing Authority were changed; certain projects in slum areas were deferred, and others on vacant land were substituted. In addition, the Housing Authority undertook to rehabilitate certain substandard dwellings in order to house families occupying other old structures that had to be torn down. The Authority was also called upon to find quarters for families rendered homeless by fires or other emergencies. In the spring of 1947, when it was disclosed that the Welfare Department, unable to find other quarters for many families on relief, had moved some of them into hotels, the Housing Authority made available vacant dwellings on sites where construction of new projects had been deferred.

Although New York is far ahead of other communities in providing public housing, many controversies have arisen over the program and policies of the Housing Authority and the city, state, and Federal administrations. Early differences relating to locations—whether blighted areas should be cleared or cheaper sites found—became academic as the demand for housing, especially for veterans, increased.

With the tremendous inflation of building costs it became apparent that private builders could not provide new housing at costs within reach of an overwhelming majority of the veterans in need of dwellings. At the same time, a majority of the veterans and others had incomes that made them ineligible for subsidized public housing, even if such accommodations had been available. This led to an insistent demand that the City Housing Authority provide self-sustaining housing to fill the gap between subsidized housing and that provided by private builders and lending institutions. As of 1947, when this issue became acute, estimates of room costs in the different categories of housing were as follows: subsidized projects, \$5.50 to \$8.50; self-sustaining developments \$12.50 to \$15.00; limited-dividend housing, \$16.00 to \$18.00; private projects, \$25.00 and up.

The city and the Housing Authority were empowered to build self-sustaining housing, but nothing had been done in this field up to 1947. In a report to Mayor O'Dwyer on December 17, 1945, Robert Moses as Construction Coordinator listed a number of objections to such a policy but nevertheless

recommended five projects of this kind; these, with a total of 19,256 rooms, were approved. Early in 1948, Mayor O'Dwyer approved a program of city-financed housing, without cash subsidy, which provides for approximately 17,000 families and would cost about \$200,000,000.

The New York City Housing Authority consists of five members, appointed for five-year terms, who serve without compensation. An amendment to the Housing Authorities Law provides that the chairman of the Authority, as reorganized by Mayor O'Dwyer in 1947, be appointed by the Mayor for an indefinite period, be removable by him, and be paid a salary to be fixed by the Board of Estimate.¹ Major General Thomas F. Farrell became chairman of the Authority on July 1, 1947, succeeding Edmond B. Butler. General Farrell, formerly State Commissioner of Public Works, directed construction of Ledo Road in Burma and was later assistant to General Groves, director of the Manhattan District atomic bomb project.

The public housing projects built or operated by the New York City Housing Authority, as of 1947, was as follows:

PERMANENT OPERATING PROJECTS

<i>Projects</i>	<i>Apartments</i>	<i>Location</i>
1. First Houses	123	Manhattan
2. Williamsburg	1,630	Brooklyn
3. Harlem River	577	Manhattan
4. Red Hook	2,545	Brooklyn
5. Queensbridge	3,149	Queens
6. Vladeck	1,531	Manhattan
7. Vladeck City	240	Manhattan
8. South Jamaica	448	Queens
9. East River	1,170	Manhattan
10. Kingsborough	1,166	Brooklyn
11. Clason Point	400	Bronx
12. Wallabout	207	Brooklyn
13. Edwin Markham	360	Richmond
14. Fort Greene	3,501	Brooklyn
Total	17,047	

PERMANENT PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR PENDING CONSTRUCTION

15. Elliott	608	Manhattan
16. Brownsville	1,338	Brooklyn
17. J. W. Johnson	1,310	Manhattan
18. Jacob Riis	1,190	Manhattan
19. Jacob Riis City	578	Manhattan
20. Abraham Lincoln	1,286	Manhattan

¹ Originally Mayor O'Dwyer had sought legislation to remove the entire Authority, but this proposal was defeated.

21. Marcy	1,717	Brooklyn
22. Amsterdam	1,084	Manhattan
23. Lillian Wald	1,805	Manhattan
24. Morrisania	1,791	Bronx
25. Gowanus	1,141	Brooklyn
26. Astoria	1,104	Queens
27. Governor Smith	1,920	Manhattan
28. Melrose	1,167	Bronx
29. Farragut	1,400	Brooklyn
30. Stephen Foster	1,337	Manhattan
Total	20,776	

TEMPORARY VETERANS' EMERGENCY PROJECTS

Jamaica Bay	2,000	Brooklyn
Ulmer Park	300	Brooklyn
Bruckner	946	Bronx
Castle Hill	962	Bronx
Northern Boulevard	1,874	Queens
Juniper Valley	345	Queens
Linden	719	Brooklyn
Rego Park	1,424	Queens
Manhattan Beach	696	Brooklyn
Fox Hills	671	Richmond
Fort Tilden	288	Queens
Total	10,255	

The six public housing projects in the state program for New York City assured by the referendum in 1947 were: Albany Houses, 840 families, and Lindsay Park Houses, 1,300 apartments, in Brooklyn; Bronx River Houses, 1,260 families, and Forest Houses, 1,350 apartments in The Bronx; Carver Houses, approximately 825 apartments, and Tompkins Square Houses, approximately 1,900 apartments, in Manhattan.

Of the 127,000 family units of permanent housing planned as possible by the end of 1948, Mayor O'Dwyer stated² that "this portion of our program has lagged in spite of our efforts to speed it up. Only 10,000 units will be ready by the end of 1948." Continuing, he said, "Under improved administrative arrangements its realization is expected, except as to the Federally aided projects." He pleaded for a continuation of Federal support to provide an additional 22,500 units which were anticipated if the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill became law.

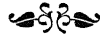
The 1948 program as planned by the city and for which the \$120,000,000 housing fund approved in the referendum of November, 1947, is earmarked, contemplates the construction of six additional projects to provide 10,000 units.

² Statement to Joint Committee on Housing of Congress of the United States, November 12, 1947.

It also proposes to make additions to Kingsborough, Brownsville, and South Jamaica houses and to Vladeck Houses in Manhattan.

In the referendum of 1947 the people also voted to increase the aggregate amount of state subsidy contracts to be entered into in any one year from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 and to increase the amount allowed to be outstanding at any one time from \$9,000,000 to \$13,000,000. This subsidy will support a total of \$435,000,000 of loan funds.

Chapter Thirty-four



New Ways of Providing Housing

NEW YORK was not only the first state to embark on a subsidized public program, but it has also, by constitutional amendment, implemented by laws that have frequently been amended to meet changing conditions, found ways to stimulate housing on a scale never before attempted. Most important of these innovations are laws permitting insurance companies, savings banks, and "redevelopment companies" to finance and operate housing projects with or without government aid. Another law, which up to 1948 had not been used, will permit the city to condemn land for redevelopment purposes. The city is permitted to impose special taxes for housing and may invest capital funds up to 2 per cent of assessed valuations in housing without reducing its borrowing capacity for other capital improvements.

As noted in the first chapter of this section, limited-dividend corporations under the first state housing laws could secure tax exemption on new construction. Insurance companies and other lending institutions also invested in real estate mortgages and made limited investments in housing projects. In 1911 the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company had over 40 per cent of its assets in urban mortgages, mostly in New York City, but it favored mortgages on large projects. The Metropolitan's first venture in small-home financing was Mapleton, a group of seven-room, semi-detached brick and limestone houses in Brooklyn. The company could not invest in second mortgages, but the price included about \$300 for a paid-up term-diminishing life policy. This was the first time a large insurance company had required amortization of a mortgage. Mapleton was not a success and the company continued to favor large mortgages.¹

Samuel Untermyer, counsel for the Lockwood Committee which investigated the insurance business in 1921, is credited with inducing Haley Fiske, then president of the Metropolitan, to undertake its first rental project in Queens.

¹ Marquis James, *The Metropolitan Life* (New York: The Viking Press, 1947).

This development, covering only 50 per cent of the land and renting at \$9 a room, set new standards during the housing shortage after the First World War. The Metropolitan, by providing \$7,000,000 in mortgage money, also made possible the following developments: the first Amalgamated Houses and Brooklyn Gardens, headed by Louis H. Pink.

Although the public housing program inaugurated by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 was of great benefit to people in the lowest income brackets, there was a great need for new housing to take care of the middle-income group which private capital could not supply. Frederick H. Ecker, who had become president of the Metropolitan, was willing to enter this field, but the New York Insurance Code prohibited direct investments of this type.

Louis H. Pink, a pioneer in housing, was Superintendent of Insurance at the time, and with the approval of Governor Herbert H. Lehman, who was an ardent and generous supporter of better housing, the law was amended in 1938 to permit life insurance companies to invest up to 10 per cent of their assets in low-rent housing. Thus, for the first time, these lending institutions were given full authority to build and operate housing developments.

Metropolitan immediately purchased a vacant 120-acre piece of land from the Catholic Protectory in the East Bronx. The price paid was \$4,000,000 or 85 cents a square foot, which made the land cost about \$390 per dwelling unit. The development erected there, named Parkchester, was opened in 1939. It contains 12,272 dwelling units, is assessed at \$50,000,000 (1947), pays full taxes, and is second only to Rockefeller Center as a city taxpayer. This highly successful project provided modern apartments in attractive surroundings at much cheaper rents than similar accommodations could be had elsewhere in the city. Though tax exemption was not involved, the city co-operated in the mapping and zoning. The city was also called upon to provide new school facilities.

Since a large percentage of Parkchester's tenants came from other apartments in The Bronx, even this huge development did not relieve the housing situation in the more congested slum areas. The main criticisms of Parkchester were that it did not clear slums and that it concentrated a huge population in tall buildings near the end of an overcrowded transit line. But Parkchester set new standards and patterns of urban housing and demonstrated that such large-scale projects could be erected more economically than smaller developments.

Before the Second World War, the Equitable Life Assurance Society started in the Hill Section of Brooklyn a smaller project, which was completed during the war to help house Navy personnel. The Clinton Hill apartments are superior to most of the apartments erected by private builders and cover less ground. This is not, however, a completely unified development comparable to many later projects.

The Redevelopment Companies Law, designed to encourage corporations to

build housing, failed to attract private capital and in 1942 it was amended, primarily to permit the Metropolitan to construct a project similar to Parkchester on the East Side of Manhattan. Stuyvesant Town, the largest project of its kind to be started in Manhattan, is located between Fourteenth and Twentieth Streets from First Avenue to the East River. On these eighteen city blocks thirty-five buildings, thirteen stories high and containing 9,000 apartments, were constructed to house about 24,000 people. The buildings in Stuyvesant Town cover about a quarter of the land. The remainder of the site is given over to a three-acre park in the center, with numerous playgrounds and other open spaces and widened streets bounding the development. The apartments are modern and attractive, and this city-within-the-city provides a new design for living in Manhattan.

To make such a project possible it was necessary for the city to condemn the site and for tax purposes to freeze valuations at the figure existing before. Thus for a period of twenty-five years the Metropolitan will pay the same taxes as were paid on the old property. The district had run down and was a blighted area, but it was not a typical congested slum. In fact, the population had dropped from 27,000 in 1927 to 11,000 in 1943. Under an agreement with the city, the Metropolitan relocated tenants in the area and agreed to limit the rentals to \$14 a room. Because of the tremendous increase in building costs, the company was permitted to raise the rents to \$17 before the first apartments were occupied in the summer of 1947.

Stuyvesant Town aroused considerable controversy. It was argued that the buildings were too high and created an excessive density of population—about 117 families per acre. Another issue related to schools. A school within the site was demolished, but no provision was made for a school as a part of the project; the city therefore had to plan new school facilities for the area, in which the school population had increased considerably. Then, too, the original plans called for a series of garages between the buildings on the periphery, which caused the development to be called a “walled city.” Garages were later placed elsewhere.

The City Planning Commission, which is required to approve such projects, recognized the validity of some of the criticisms, but the Commission and the Board of Estimate were given to understand that insistence on lower densities and other conditions would cause abandonment of the project. In a minority report, Lawrence M. Orton of the Planning Commission stressed some of the objections listed above, and they were reflected in statements by other members of the Commission.

A fundamental point that received little consideration related to the ultimate disposal of the project.² The original law provided that such projects should

² See minority statement by Commissioner Rodgers in the report of the City Planning Commission.

revert to the city after the period of amortization. This feature was later eliminated. It seems reasonable, however, that when the city condemns property, gives up streets, and waives taxes on the improvement the property should revert to the city after the money invested and the interest have been fully repaid.

Another serious legal and social question raised in connection with Stuyvesant Town was that of racial discrimination. When the project was under consideration Mr. Ecker stated that no provision was to be made for Negro tenants and expressed his personal view that housing Negroes and whites in the same apartments would be unwise. Commissioner Moses, who represented Mayor LaGuardia in the negotiations with the Metropolitan, supported Mr. Ecker and declared: "Those who insist upon making projects of this kind a battleground for the vindication of social objectives, however desirable, and who persist in claiming that a private project is in fact a public project, obviously are looking for a political issue and not for results in the form of actual slum clearance."³

Injunctions were sought to prevent the city from using the powers of condemnation and from permitting tax exemption on the project since it was to discriminate against Negroes. Newbold Morris, then president of the City Council, voted against the agreement because of this issue, and the City Council later passed an ordinance prohibiting similar projects without anti-discrimination clauses in the city's agreements. Stuyvesant Town was specifically exempted from this local law, and the original legal actions were dismissed. Later, when suit was brought to compel Stuyvesant Town to admit certain Negro tenants, the lower court held that the company was within its rights in selecting tenants. Though Negroes are not accommodated in Stuyvesant Town, the Metropolitan in 1944 announced another housing project to clear a slum area in a Negro neighborhood in Harlem. This project, called Riverton, is located between Fifth Avenue and the Hudson River at 135th Street and consists of seven thirteen-story buildings.

Meantime the Metropolitan acquired from the Consolidated Edison Company about nineteen acres directly north of Stuyvesant Town and began planning Peter Cooper Village. This project, like Parkchester, is not under the Redevelopment Companies Law. The city's powers of condemnation were not used, and the property pays full taxes. The apartments here are superior to those in Stuyvesant Town, and the rents are higher. In response to requests made by the city, apartments in Peter Cooper Village were assigned to United Nations personnel, but this arrangement was later abrogated because of the project's discriminatory policy. Veterans were given priority in Stuyvesant Town and in other housing projects.

Following the adoption of the anti-discrimination law, no new housing projects were initiated under the Redevelopment Companies Law. As has been noted,

³ *New York Times*, May 29, 1943.

the Metropolitan did not seek city help for Cooper Village. The Equitable project in Brooklyn and that of the New York Life at Fresh Meadows, in Queens, have the same status. The city co-operated in these developments but did not condemn the land or extend tax exemption.

When the state law was amended to permit insurance companies to undertake such developments as Parkchester, an effort was made to permit savings banks to make similar investments. This provision was eliminated at the time, but later the law was modified to allow savings banks to participate in housing projects through the Savings Banks Trust Company.

The City Planning Commission, in its Master Plan for the Brooklyn Civic Center and Downtown Area, designated several areas as suitable for clearance and redevelopment for residential purposes. A group of Brooklyn savings banks became interested in building in one of those areas, but there were doubts as to the legal power of the city to condemn the property for a private project. The site for what was later named Concord Village was adjacent to Adams Street, which it was planned to widen by taking a 100-foot strip on the east side. The city acquired the site by excess condemnation in connection with the public improvement, after the savings bank group had agreed to buy the land at auction; for this land it paid a sum greater than the assessed value. Concord Village will thus have the status of a private development and is not subject to the anti-discrimination law, although the city condemned the land. Subsequently a law was passed specifically empowering the city to condemn land for redevelopment and housing purposes, but up to 1948 it had not been used, presumably because no group was willing to build and operate under the anti-discrimination law.

Parkway Village in Queens is another housing project with a unique status. It is located between Grand Central Parkway and Union Turnpike, near Flushing Meadow Park, and is owned and operated by a group of savings banks. The development was undertaken after a rental agreement was signed with representatives of the United Nations and is occupied by its personnel. Fresh Meadows also houses some of the United Nations personnel, but veterans were given priority for most of the apartments.

At one time racial discrimination was charged against all the projects housing United Nations employees. In many ways, discriminatory practices in housing designed for United Nations occupancy were considered even more shocking than those previously attacked in other housing developments on the ground that the projects received government aid and were financed by insurance companies and savings banks with money received from policyholders and depositors, both colored and white. The housing of Negroes, always a serious problem in New York, became worse after the war. The plight of married Negro veterans was extremely bad.

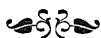
In 1948, savings banks in New York had plans for housing projects totaling \$40,000,000 which were being deferred because of high material and labor costs.

The Federal Housing Administration, created in 1934, greatly stimulated the building of small homes in the entire Metropolitan area. The F.H.A. facilitated the financing of these homes by insuring single, long-term mortgages up to 90 per cent of the cost. The Federal government took the major risks, and lending institutions provided the capital. Under this arrangement thousands of private homes were built.

The small F.H.A. houses are far superior to dwellings in the same price range provided by speculative builders. There was improved plotting of land, as well as better materials, construction, and supervision, and the amortized mortgages removed one of the worst faults of older methods of financing. The F.H.A. was not equally successful in meeting the need for rentable dwellings, but the demand for shelter following the global war led to a great expansion of its activities in financing large developments not only of single-family homes but also of apartments.

Public housing and various forms of government aid have brought about a real revolution in housing in New York. Standards have been raised and ways have been found to tap reservoirs of capital which had never before been used for dwellings. The new housing is of modern construction; the apartments are fireproof. Housing in the post-war period was slow in getting started, but by 1948 construction was well under way on plans that will transform many sections of the city. Thus the population will soon be better housed than at any time in its history.

Chapter Thirty-five



City Planning and the Housing Problem



IN THE early days the tannery in Whitehall Street became so offensive that it was forced to move to Beekman's Swamp, almost under Brooklyn Bridge, and this area has since been the leather center of New York. It was partly the obnoxious odors from Jacobus Roosevelt's tannery that caused President Washington to desert the first White House at Franklin Square in February 23, 1790, and to move to the mansion of Alexander Macomb at 39-41 Broadway, which had been remodeled for the French Minister.

Most of New York's housing difficulties have their roots in bad planning, or lack of planning, as well as in the city's failure to exercise proper controls, in the public interest, to prevent abuses. The misuse of land and buildings has been a problem from the beginning. In a community where personal and property rights were zealously upheld and the profit motive was dominant, it was a long time before people could be prevented from doing virtually as they pleased with land and buildings, regardless of the effects on adjacent property or on the community as a whole. The only effective restrictions were private covenants, and when these expired or were broken, as often happened, rapid deterioration followed.

In the name of health and safety the authorities gradually curbed some of the worst abuses. Hogs and cattle were kept off the streets, the health of the community was better safeguarded, and buildings became reasonably safe from collapse and less of a fire menace. But there were few restrictions of the uses or of the height and bulk of buildings until the first Building Zone Resolution was adopted in 1916.

Under the original Zoning Resolution of 1916, the city was divided into three classes of districts, in each of which the permitted uses, height, and bulk of buildings were defined. Business and residential uses were separated, and all others were confined to unrestricted districts. Heights were related to the

width of the streets, and after the walls of a building had reached a certain height it was necessary to set back the walls above that point. The effects of these restrictions are most notable in the towers of Manhattan. The bulk of buildings was limited by specifying the percentage of a given lot that might be covered by buildings in the different classes of districts.

The administration of the zoning regulations is simple. Plans submitted to the Department of Housing and Buildings, are rejected unless the proposed structure conforms to the zoning requirements. To prevent hardship in exceptional cases, a Board of Standards and Appeals was created. When hardship is shown, the Board may permit deviations from the regulations so long as they do not violate the general purposes of zoning.

New York was the first American city to adopt comprehensive zoning. Because of doubts as to the legality of this method of controlling private property, the original regulations were extremely mild. At the same time, too much land was either zoned for business or left unrestricted. Furthermore the zoning was not retroactive, so that unsatisfactory old conditions were not corrected.

Although the courts upheld reasonable zoning, the regulations in effect before the building boom following the First World War were wholly inadequate. Zoning was then the function of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, and elective officials are always reluctant to face the opposition of property owners and real estate interests that vigorously oppose efforts to regulate their property.¹

The Seabury inquiry in 1932 showed that zoning and the granting of deviation permits by the Board of Standards and Appeals had become a racket. The Charter adopted in 1936 placed zoning under the City Planning Commission, which has exclusive authority to initiate changes in zoning. The Commission, after public hearings, also amends the zoning regulations and district maps, subject to the approval of the Board of Estimate. Since 1938, when the Planning Commission took office, the zoning standards have been raised and much re-zoning has taken place. Higher standards as to residential buildings were also imposed by the State Multiple Dwellings Law of 1929.

The Zoning Resolution has been subjected to numerous revisions, new zoning districts have been set up, and the district maps have been revised from time to time. Instead of the original classifications of districts as business, residential, and unrestricted, the city now has a number of different kinds of business and residential districts and a manufacturing district, as well as several special districts where various uses are either excluded or permitted under conditions that assure protection to surrounding property. For example, the Times Square area is in a special district where large flashing signs, excluded from all other districts

¹ For a brief history of zoning in New York see Cleveland Rodgers, *New York Plans for the Future* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943).

except those that are unrestricted, are permitted. Fifth Avenue is in a restricted retail district, from which theaters, open store fronts, shooting galleries, and other types of structure found in business sections are excluded. In large-scale residential districts, a special zoning regulation permits certain kinds of business, and under another regulation laboratories and administrative buildings are permitted in districts where the other uses correspond to those in residential areas.

New residential districts include areas exclusively for one-family houses, other areas for row houses and two-family dwellings from which apartments are excluded, and still others for garden-type apartments. These and other piecemeal changes have made the Zoning Resolution something of a hodge-podge, and it is badly in need of complete revision and simplification. Much more drastic control over land is essential if the worst features of urban living are to be overcome.

One great zoning difficulty lies in the disadvantage to the city of imposing more restrictions on real estate, on which it depends for much of its revenue. Though real estate and the city as a whole benefit from appropriate zoning, which stabilizes values and protects them, individual owners and holders of mortgages generally do not want restrictions. Good zoning, especially in a city already largely developed, often hurts some individual property owner; the cost of developing restricted land is greater, and this means higher costs to home owners and tenants.

Residential zoning in New York also tends to segregate families on the basis of income. This trend has become quite marked in recent years. People of means have always lived in the best homes and in the best neighborhoods, but formerly they protected themselves or were protected by deed restrictions. Segregating people on the basis of income is a new exercise of governmental power. People in the lower-income group who are fortunate enough to get into public housing projects are well protected, but an overwhelming majority of families in New York cannot afford to buy or rent housing in highly restricted zones. The only solution, apparently, is to plan and zone neighborhoods for dwellings of various types, where people can get the kind of protection they should have regardless of race, creed, or income.

Large-scale developments in New York, such as Parkchester, created the need for much more flexible zoning than was possible under the city-wide regulations. For example, it was necessary to set up small unrestricted districts in the midst of Parkchester to accommodate group garages. Such projects also require stores, theaters, and other facilities not generally permitted in residential districts. To meet this situation the Planning Commission amended the zoning regulations to permit such uses under suitable conditions. A proposed amendment to permit such flexibility in other than residential districts was rejected by the Board of Estimate, but the trend is away from the old rigidities. Parking facilities, which

were once excluded from most districts because they were considered either fire hazards or objectionable, are now regarded as desirable when they are properly designed as part of a development.

The Planning Commission's primary function is to make a Master Plan of the city to serve as a guide in its development. This is a highly complicated matter and a never-ending task. In determining where and how people are to live, many methods are used. Dwellings may be erected anywhere in the city, provided they meet the standards of the Building Code, but they must conform to the zoning restrictions in the zone in which they are erected. The number of people, or density of population, in a given area are also determined by zoning.

Control over dwellings is much more effective in the case of public housing and large-scale developments than in that of strictly private undertakings. Under state and Federal laws the approval of the City Planning Commission is required for all public housing projects. The location of these is important for many reasons, but many difficulties arise. The use of public funds and of the power of condemnation finds its justification in the clearing of slums and the providing of low-rent housing. It is not always easy, however, to find the proper sites. As a guide in this matter, the Planning Commission in 1945 adopted a Master Plan of Areas Suitable for Clearance and Low-Rent Housing. This Master Plan, as modified from time to time, has determined the location of the numerous public housing projects since erected. It is also used in selecting sites for projects undertaken by lending institutions where condemnation and tax exemption are invoked. Other large-scale developments come before the Commission in connection with problems related to zoning, the mapping of streets, and public facilities generally.

Schools are vital factors in the housing situation. The lack of adequate school facilities is largely responsible for the exodus of families from old congested sections to outlying areas. Other essential facilities also are often lacking in old sections, as well as light and air and other amenities. Since 1916 there has been a steady improvement in living conditions in the outlying sections, where neighborhoods are protected by better zoning.

New dwellings in old sections also conform to higher standards, but to provide suitable environments in the older sections it is necessary to clear large areas and rebuild them from entirely different plans. This is a costly process, but it is cheaper than the continual shifting of populations and the expansion of the suburbs. Most of the old sections have transportation and other facilities already installed. Some of these facilities, such as schools, may be obsolete, but it is cheaper to replace them than to provide in newly developed sections all the facilities and services needed.

New York's housing problem has been aggravated through the years by the

city's failure to prevent deterioration in the old sections and its inability to expand facilities to keep up with the population shifts. Efforts were made by the Planning Commission to reverse the trend away from old sections by concentrating on their redevelopment, but the situation following the global war made this impossible. The unprecedented demand for any kind of housing led to more hurried building on cheap land in the suburbs, whereas redevelopment in the older sections lagged. The old arguments over centralization versus decentralization became academic, and efforts were made to accelerate both—though the redevelopment in the older sections promised to house more people more quickly than the more numerous but smaller projects in the suburbs.

Most theories and generalizations concerning housing in New York are subject to modification on short notice, and many cyclic changes may be traced. For a decade or so after the consolidation of the city the well-to-do lived in the older sections, and the poor who escaped the slums lived in cheap houses on cheap land in the suburbs. Later the more exclusive suburban developments attracted those who could afford the new housing. The period in the twenties saw a more general exodus to the outlying districts. Meantime it had become fashionable to live on Park Avenue, and more and more wealthy people gave up big houses, in town or in the country, for the simple life in luxury apartments.

With the shutting down on immigration came a drop in population in the slums, but the depression brought an increase in the number of Negroes and others of low income who came to repack the slums and old houses in many sections. Fluctuating economic conditions, of course, have had more to do with housing changes than anything else. Booms, which stimulate new building, also accelerate deterioration, because those who can afford to do so move away from old sections.

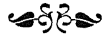
Other New York housing cycles are more definitely related to age groups. People require different kinds of housing at different ages. Thousands of young people are attracted to New York and come to Manhattan seeking fame and fortune. In time these young people meet and marry. They may continue to live in Manhattan for a while, but when they have children most of them are ready to move to the suburbs. Those who can afford to do so buy homes and start raising their families. When the children grow up they too marry and move away, leaving whole neighborhoods inhabited largely by older people living in homes that are too big for their needs. Meantime the schools and other facilities are in excess of the present needs here, whereas newer sections go without schools and other improvements.

Such problems of city planning are common to all communities, but they are aggravated in New York by many factors other than that of size. Because of the high costs of land and buildings, a third or more of the city's population cannot

pay the rents charged for decent dwelling quarters. Subsidized public housing and low-cost housing receiving government aid are necessary. When enough of this kind of housing has been erected, private building and competition should end the housing shortage which has been continuous since the tip of Manhattan first became crowded.

Part Eight: » SOME OF NEW
YORK'S INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Chapter Thirty-six



The Merging of Modern Intelligencers

NEW YORK'S multitudes became acutely aware of a new miracle in the fall of 1947, on the eve of the World Series baseball games. In a remarkably short time practically every tavern in town displayed signs bearing the single word "Television." To the wise this word was sufficient. It meant that for the price of a glass of beer one could see the contest between the Dodgers and the Yankees which was to settle the most exciting of local post-war issues.

Modern New York excels in many fields because of her superior facilities for the gathering, distribution, interchange, and interpretation of information. Here every form of communication has been developed beyond anything previously known, and the various mediums for the dissemination of news have been multiplied, merged, and brought to such a stage of efficiency that it is possible for more people to know more about almost everything, and to learn it more quickly, than anywhere in the world.

Long before the Revolution, however, New Yorkers were going to taverns to get their news. That is where the daily newspapers started. Boston and Philadelphia had weekly newspapers before William Bradford came to New York and started the city's first printing press, but the gathering and distribution of news—"intelligence" as it was then called—began in taverns or coffee houses.

Lloyd's Coffee House in London, where *Lloyd's News* as well as the insurance business was inaugurated, was the model for Bradford's London Coffee House in Philadelphia, where "was received the earliest and most authentic intelligence from every quarter." In New York the Merchants' Coffee House, at Wall and Water streets, performed like services; all information concerning ships and other matters was made available through its newsbook which was open to patrons. Since merchants and other men of affairs met at the "coffee houses," which were really taverns, the close connection between news gather-

ing and distribution and all kinds of business, politics, and other community activities was firmly established before newspapers and other forms of communication were developed.

In colonial days New York was relatively isolated: Williamsburg, Philadelphia, and Boston had more contacts with Europe. William Bradford, imported from Philadelphia by the City Council in 1725 to print its Minutes, on November 8 of that year issued the first number of the city's first paper, the *New York Gazette*. This served, among other things, to apprentice John Peter Zenger, whose *New York Weekly* attained lasting fame as a journal of dissenting opinions, and whose acquittal in the famous case against him established the freedom of the press. It was Zenger also who demonstrated that newspapers could be made to pay through the carrying of advertisements.

Superior information early played an important part in advancing the interests of traders, merchants, and bankers. Baron Rothschild learned the outcome of the battle of Waterloo before his competitors by using carrier pigeons. John Jacob Astor, using forest runners on his fur-trade routes, got the first news of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent by way of Canada. One of J. Pierpont Morgan's enterprising activities, before the Atlantic cable was laid to Newfoundland, was to go to Halifax, intercept the European mail, and telegraph important information to his firm in New York. Later his partner, James Goodwin, reversed this procedure, telegraphing confidential news of the Union victory at Vicksburg to Halifax, so that Peabody & Co., in London, had a three-day start in buying United States bonds for the subsequent rise.

It is said that promptly after Colonel George Washington Roebling, of Brooklyn Bridge fame, using a balloon for observation purposes, reported the movements of Lee's troops toward Gettysburg, the news was transmitted by private wire to the Morgan offices.¹ Wall Street has always been intensely interested in communications, and it is not a mere coincidence that the telegraph, cable, telephone, radio, and television reached their highest development in New York.

Many old English and American newspapers were called "intelligencers." This broader term is more truly applicable to the best of today's New York newspapers and to other modern mediums for collecting and dispensing information. NEWS signified the four directions from which the first papers received what they published. Today we take it for granted that the news comes from all directions; but speed of transmission and interpretation are paramount in importance, and news dispensing is no longer the monopoly of the journals.

Yet the newspapers, the radio, and other media follow patterns formed early in the history of New York, when newspapers were almost the only sources of

¹ John W. Winkler, *Morgan the Magnificent* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930).

information. They covered the local field and exploited every available source for national and world news. The latter was usually gleaned from foreign publications arriving by ship and was carried under such headings as "Foreign Intelligence."

New York's early newspapers were primarily political. The news most steadily in demand was that bearing on trade. Astor was keen to get news concerning the Treaty of Ghent, because he was extending his fur business and wanted the routes cleared around the Great Lakes. Clipper ships speeded up foreign news considerably, and the new Federal government expedited matters by establishing post roads and post offices—the only public works specifically authorized by the Constitution. But New York was especially avid for news that came from ships. The South Street merchants, with their clippers, were rival news dispensers, but their news was mostly about the goods they had received from abroad.

The Atlantic cable ended the clipper-ship trade, since thereafter any merchant could order goods abroad, but long after the cable and telegraph had become commonplace, New York newspapers featured "ship news." James Gordon Bennett's *Herald* and the *New York World* engaged in a feverish rivalry for such news. They built larger and faster news boats to go farther and farther off Sandy Hook to meet incoming ships and race back to the Battery with the information they had gathered. In time the *Herald* and *World* pooled their efforts and maintained a single news boat. Later the press associations took over. Although the ship news reporters and photographers still meet the big liners and pick up items, mostly from celebrities, these are seldom of much significance. All the important news has already been transmitted.

The *New York Herald*, founded by James Gordon Bennett in 1835, was the first of the city's newspapers to broaden the scope of its coverage. It daringly began to print news of society, of Wall Street, and of sports and even published weather reports. The *Herald's* coverage of the Civil War was notable, and it scored many scoops. When real news was scarce, the *Herald* manufactured it. The town was once badly scared by a fake story of animals escaping from the zoo, and it was the *Herald* under the younger Bennett which sent Henry Stanley to Africa to find Dr. Livingstone. Horace Greeley's *Tribune* was more distinctly a journal of opinion.

The *Times*, under its founder, Henry J. Raymond, was one of the earliest crusading newspapers, its exposé of the Tweed Ring being an outstanding journalistic contribution to New York's history. Since then the *Times* has steadily developed until it is today, along with the *Herald-Tribune* and other newspapers, among New York's most valuable assets. It is not within the scope of this work to tell the absorbing story of New York's newspapers, but the development of the *Times* under Adolph S. Ochs reveals the processes by which

a private enterprise may become a public institution. The New York *Times* is now the most complete daily record of significant world happenings. To this end it has merged all modern facilities and become the greatest intelligencer in history.

The creation of such an institution typifies the concepts and methods by which institutions and agencies in other fields have evolved in New York. A small army of specially trained men were involved, but the man who did more than any other to stimulate the development of the *Times* was Carr V. Van Anda, who served as its managing editor for over a quarter of a century. Van Anda possessed what John H. Finley called "a planetary mind." The scope of his interests seemed limitless; his knowledge was profound, and to him all knowledge was related and all ideas were news.

In the course of his night's work—and he was always on the job until the paper went to press—Van Anda might check with Peary on Dr. Cook's claims to having discovered the North Pole, or he might scoop all rivals on a 6,000-year-old story by translating the hieroglyphics when Carter opened the tomb of Tutankhamen. When Albert Einstein's relativity formula came into the *Times* office, Van Anda scrutinized it, found a mathematical error, and had Einstein acknowledge the mistake, after which Van Anda wrote perhaps the clearest exposition of the theory of relativity ever published for laymen.

It is not surprising that a newspaper under the direction of such a man should be superior. With the firm support of Mr. Ochs, whose standards were of the highest, the *Times* expanded its news coverage, regardless of costs. This policy has been continued under Arthur Sulzberger, who married Mr. Ochs's daughter. The fact that the *Times* is published in New York is said to have been an important consideration in persuading the United Nations' representatives to locate in the town where its proceedings would be more fully and accurately reported than anywhere in the world.

The *Herald-Tribune* is second only to the *Times* in its news coverage, and it has more distinctive features. There are probably more able editors today than ever before, but their work is not dramatized. Few of the readers can name the editors of the *Times* or the *Tribune*, Charles Merz and Whitelaw Reid, respectively, or those of any other New York newspaper, but they know the columnists and radio commentators. One explanation of that fact is simply that publishing a newspaper in New York has become Big Business and old-style personal journalism could not compete in popular appeal with well-rounded news coverage and feature material. Something of value disappeared when the press generally, after overdoing its crusading, seemed to lose that spirit and to lack civic zeal. To be sure, *PM* is primarily a crusading sheet, and the *World-Telegram* sometimes recalls the old *World*, but by and large editorial capacity for indignation seems to have diminished almost to the vanishing point.

The merging of New York newspapers over half a century has resulted in reducing their number by more than half. Frank Munsey, during the years he occupied the field, was responsible for the demise of several famous old papers, including the *Press, Mail and Globe*, and he sold the *Herald* to the *Tribune*. The disappearance of Pulitzer's *Morning World* was the most notable loss during this period.

Strangers often remark that New Yorkers seem to have a mania for reading newspapers. On crowded subways, on the streets, and even in elevators they are either reading or clutching their precious sheets. One might suppose that they had an inordinate interest in everything that was happening at home or abroad. New Yorkers probably have as much or more interest in general news as do readers elsewhere, but most of them have special interests and they seek out the things that appeal to them. Watch the readers on subways and commuter trains or alongside the newspaper stands. They may glance at the first page headlines, but most of them turn quickly to the section of the paper where they expect to find what they especially want. It may be the comic strips, the sports page, or the stock-market news, or even the editorial page; or it may be one of the many specialized features that present opportunities for making money, or are directly related to the day's work. The salesman or merchant may turn to the list of buyers who have arrived in town or to a rival's advertisement. The undertaker or florist may run through the death notices. Almost every column contains information that may be turned into profit.

With world-wide communications centering in New York, and with so many outstanding newspapers here, it was logical to expand and organize news and intelligence services of all kinds. The Associated Press was established in 1848, and the United Press was originally organized in 1882. Later came the International and Universal News services, organized by William Randolph Hearst but serving other papers as well.

Marconi's wireless from lightships to shore was used in 1898, but the first regular wireless service was inaugurated in New York on October 17, 1907. Radio quickly followed. Dr. Lee De Forest, of New York, improving on the J. A. Fleming vacuum tube, made a broadcast of Caruso singing "Pagliacci" at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1909. There was a ten-year legal battle over the patent rights, but by 1919 the conflicting interests were merged and the Radio Corporation of America was formed. The American Telephone and Telegraph Company established station WEAJ in 1922, and "chain" broadcasting began the same year. There was another merging of interests in 1926 when the RCA organized the National Broadcasting Company. The Columbia Broadcasting Company and other stations and chains followed. Large networks were soon covering the country and broadcasting international programs.

Although the possibilities of radio were recognized from the first, the early

programs were primarily entertainment and were devised to sell radio sets. In this they were highly successful, despite the loss of production during the war. The broadcasting of news bulletins was a feature of the radio networks almost from the beginning; but the radio stations had no facilities for gathering news, and a conflict arose between the broadcasters and the newspapers and press associations. Arrangements were finally worked out under which both the timing and the nature of news bulletins were agreed upon. With the development of sponsored programs the revenue of the radio stations was increased tremendously and the scope of the programs broadened.

A virtually new industry was born with the advent of the radio commentator. Within certain limits—not clearly defined—the radio commentator replaced the old-time editor and editorials in newspapers, with the difference that the names and personalities of the commentators were exploited. H. V. Kaltenborn, at the time associate editor of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, was the first radio commentator. He had been a speaker on current events and transferred to the radio in 1922. In 1930 he became news editor and analyst for the Columbia Broadcasting Company and later joined the National Broadcasting Company. Radio news and comment correspond to the news and editorials in newspapers, and as advertising affinities they have commercial sponsors. They soon had become a Big Business, with sponsors bidding for stars.

Kaltenborn and other commentators later began functioning as radio reporters as well as commentators, covering important events all over the world and giving first-hand accounts and eye-witness descriptions of happenings with a running comment. Kaltenborn himself set up a microphone on a battlefield during the Spanish Civil War, and in the Second World War the radio reporter was as ubiquitous as the newspaper correspondent.

The close relation between newspaper and radio reporting led to direct use of the latter by several New York newspapers. The New York *Times*, which early made use of the wireless in assembling news, inaugurated the Every-Hour-on-the-Hour News broadcasts and later bought station WQXR. The *Herald-Tribune* also began broadcasting news and features during the war. The *Post* owns a radio station, and other New York newspapers have radio affiliations. New York City's own station WNYC broadcasts news along with special features of interest to the public. Being non-commercial, the city station maintains a high standard in its educational and cultural programs.

New York's high-speed intelligence services employ many mediums. The spreading of knowledge is a co-operative enterprise, but where there is so much going on it is necessary to employ full-time gossips to do the dispensing, and they have to use highly selective methods to screen out the things deemed of general interest. The rest is left to the specialists, who have their own clienteles. Newspapers and radio stations try to emulate the department stores in the variety

of the informational goods they distribute, but they fall far short of meeting the highly specialized needs of many whose activities demand the right kind of knowledge at the right time. These people rely on ticker tape, the teletype, the telephone, the telegraph, and their own or other special intelligence services.

In "The American Magazine Grows Up,"² Frederick Lewis Allen, editor of *Harper's Magazine*, gives a concise account of the development of periodicals in the United States during the past century. With a few notable exceptions, such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, still published in Boston, and the Curtis publications in Philadelphia, the magazine business is generally centered in New York. To be sure, the *Reader's Digest*, with an estimated circulation of 10,000,000, issues from Pleasantville, New York, but DeWitt Wallace and his wife started pasting their magazine together in Greenwich Village, and it is still largely a New York product.

As listed by Mr. Allen, a majority of the thirty-nine periodicals, with over a million circulation, are either produced or edited in New York. They range from *Harper's*, started in 1850, and the *New York Times Magazine*, to the "pulp" that clutter the newsstands. Their contents are as varied as American life itself, but they all dispense intelligence in some form. It is not always easy to distinguish between a magazine article and a news story. The better magazines often scoop the newspapers on timely material, and some material in the papers is worthy of magazine publication.

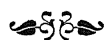
There has been a further merging of intelligencers in New York as newspapers, magazines, literary syndicates, radio chains, movies, the drama, books, and other related activities became fused. In many instances the same creators and entrepreneurs are engaged in all of these fields; there is also much overlapping if not complete integration. And when Big Money is needed for such far-reaching activities—which even embrace Hollywood—it is to be had in Wall Street.

This has been a natural growth and coalescence. In a recent book, Rufus and Otilie Wilson³ tell the story of New York's contribution to literature in terms of landmarks. A map of Greater New York dotted to show where the most famous of writers have lived and worked would resemble a well-peppered sheet of paper, for the index of the book fills over thirty pages and is by no means exhaustive. Besides, in writing as in other matters, often the most prolific people and much of the most useful work remain anonymous.

² *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1947.

³ Rufus Rockwell Wilson and Otilie Erickson Wilson, *New York in Literature* (Elmira, N. Y.: The Primavera Press, 1947).

Chapter Thirty-seven



The Metropolis as a College Town

NEW YORK is the largest educational center in the world; its student population of over a million equals the population of a city the size of Cleveland. This by no means measures the importance of the city as a training place for the professions and crafts. In a sense the city as a whole is a vast university specializing in adult education and facilities for self-improvement.

The city's own institutions of higher education provide collegiate training for the largest body of students in the United States. Its four colleges occupy six sites in four of the five boroughs and consist of thirty-five buildings. All of Greater New York is the campus and dormitory of the 67,000 students of the four city colleges. Providing free higher education is a rare municipal function, and nothing comparable in scope to the New York City colleges has been undertaken in the country. Although education at all levels is a state function, the State of New York is without a university and its contributions to higher education are far below those of many other states in relation to the population. After much agitation, the State was expected to make more aid available in 1948.

For over a century New York City has been providing collegiate training free. The College of The City of New York, commonly known as City College, was founded in 1847. It was located at Lexington Avenue and 23rd Street until 1907, when it moved into its new buildings, designed by George B. Post. City College is largely for men, women being admitted only to its schools of Business, Education, and Technology. Hunter College, for women, began as a normal college in 1868. Brooklyn and Queens colleges, established in 1930 and 1937 respectively, are coeducational. The city contributes about \$10,000,000 annually to meet the operating costs of the four colleges, and it also provides and maintains the plants. Another \$1,000,000 comes from a variety of fees, chiefly paid by those taking

no-credit courses. Tuition is free to residents of New York who meet the entrance requirements for students working toward a degree.

During the war, The Bronx buildings of Hunter College were used as the Navy's Training School for enlisted women of the Naval Reserve. Later the Hospital Corps Rehabilitation Training School was established there. In 1946 the buildings at Hunter became the first temporary headquarters of the United Nations. The first Vocational Advisement Unit of the Veterans' Administration was established at City College. More than 14,000 students took Engineering, Science, and Management War Training at the city colleges as part of the National Defense Program. More than 23,500 students and alumni served in the armed forces, and 463 faculty members were given military leaves; it is known that 772 decorations for unusual valor were awarded to them.

Brooklyn College, established in temporary quarters in 1930, could not meet the demands of the borough. The new college buildings, first occupied in 1937, were erected as part of the Works Progress Administration program. By 1939 the enrollment was 13,900.

Queens College, youngest of the city's institutions of higher education, came into being when buildings became available as a result of a scandal in the management of a truants' school for boys. Charles S. Colden, the district attorney of Queens, had exposed conditions in this school and been instrumental in having it closed. Realizing that Queens needed a city college, Colden, who later became a Supreme Court Justice, then started a campaign that led to the creation of the college in the old truants' school. The buildings are still inadequate for the borough's needs, but the site is one of the finest in the city and plans have been prepared for a group of suitable structures.

The city colleges have their own presidents and separate faculties, under the supervision of the Board of Higher Education, whose chairman, Ordway Tead, is a recognized authority in the field and a member of the special commission named by President Truman in 1947 to advise the Federal government in its program for aid to higher education. A committee of the Legislature, after studying a report by a group of educators headed by Dr. George D. Strayer, declared: "It is enough to say here that, in the opinion of the committee, the students of the colleges in the City of New York present the most startling challenge to public education and to the American way of life in all these United States."

Columbia University, the oldest, best-known, and largest institution of higher education in the city—with its many schools, both graduate and undergraduate, and its affiliates, Teachers College, Barnard College, Bard College, and the Medical School—has an average yearly attendance of 35,000 students. New York University with an even larger student body, has buildings in several sections, chiefly around Washington Square and in The Bronx. Three Catholic

colleges—Manhattan, the still larger Fordham University in The Bronx, and St. John's University in Brooklyn—have annual registrations of 10,000. Cooper Union, chartered in 1859 by Peter Cooper, and Pratt Institute, established in Brooklyn by Charles Pratt, are notable pioneering institutions in their fields.

New York has approximately 800 public schools, with an annual enrollment of about a million children and a teaching and supervising staff of 35,000. The New York City expense budget for 1947-48 provided \$232,000,000 for education, of which the city pays \$175,667,000 and the state \$54,500,000. The proposed 1948 capital budget included over \$40,110,000 for new buildings, and the program of the Board of Education called for an additional quarter of a billion dollars.

Despite these impressive statistics New York has never fully met the school needs of the community. This is not attributable entirely to lack of money or to indifference on the part of the public or officials. Tremendous shifts in population occur faster than schools can be erected, and it has simply been impossible to keep up with the demands of the growing city. During the depression the city built 59 new schools, yet in 1948 the school program was ten years behind. The war, of course, was partly responsible, because construction was halted for several years, but it has not been possible to meet the demands even under ordinary conditions.

New York, before the consolidation, could not erect schools as fast as the population spread northward. By the time the normal needs of the population along the rapid transit lines had been served, the flood of immigrants had made an immense school building program imperative on the lower East Side. Before these needs had been fully met the city was expanded to take in the enormous areas of Kings, Queens, Richmond, and Bronx counties.

Implicit in the Acts of Consolidation is the promise that all sections of Greater New York shall be treated alike. Brooklyn had a school system that was wholly inadequate, and the other new boroughs were even worse off. As transportation improved and new areas developed, the efforts to keep up with the growing child population seemed almost hopeless. Next to transit, the most insistent demands of new sections are for schools, and more schools. In the old sections the demand is for new schools to replace obsolete structures. In some of these older sections, notably on the west side of Manhattan, many of the schools still in use are over a hundred years old. Many new sections are without schools. At the same time there are large areas where the school population is too small to fill the satisfactory existing school buildings; these conditions occur in some neighborhoods where the children have grown up, married, and moved away, leaving mostly old people in the single-family neighborhoods.

New York's schools start with kindergarten classes and carry children through the elementary, junior high, and academic high schools or with vocational high

schools for specialized training. The vocational training includes technical, textile, music, industrial arts, printing and other courses. Institutes at a post-high school level carry on special training in some fields, such as aviation mechanics, commercial photography, boat building, pattern making, shoe manufacturing, forestry, vocational music, and modern design.

The methods of teaching and the quality of the education imparted in the city's schools have been as varied as the building programs. Most of the criticism from the public relates to the lack of buildings, the overcrowding of classes, and inadequate playgrounds. From time to time educators have criticized the teaching, textbooks, and other features of the system, but there has not been a serious disturbance over the quality of the school work since Mayor Hylan attacked the Gary system instituted in New York under John Purroy Mitchel. In one respect, at least, the schools do an outstanding job. Children of all races and creeds learn how to get along together. That the city has been relatively free from clashes and is exceptionally orderly must be attributed in large measure to the work of the schools.

New York has several hundred private schools in the five boroughs, from nursery schools to college preparatory; many of these experiment with new methods or are definitely of the progressive type. Denominational schools, mostly Roman Catholic, also number in the hundreds and teach as many as 200,000 students each year. The Ethical Culture School and its adjunct, the Fieldston Day and Country School, had its beginning in 1878 when Felix Adler started a kindergarten. The libraries, schools, and colleges participate in conducting many classes in adult education; thus the city constantly encourages education and tries to make it readily accessible to all, without cost and at convenient locations throughout Greater New York. To meet the manifest needs, however, more aid is essential. Although education is a state function, and New York State does not make adequate contributions to libraries, schools, and colleges in New York City, the state, under Governor Dewey had been more generous than under any recent administrator.

New York's first public circulating library was opened in 1731, in the old Stadt-Huys, with 1,642 books received from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The latest survey shows that the city has some 400 reference collections, containing about 16,500,000 volumes. Many of these are open to the public; others are restricted but are at the service of scholars and writers. The city itself maintains three public library systems—the New York Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library, and the Queens Borough Public Library—which together serve different parts of Greater New York and all the five boroughs.

The library that is largest and widest in its scope is the Reference Department of the New York Public Library, located in its central building at Fifth Avenue

and 42nd Street. In size it is exceeded only by the Library of Congress and the Harvard and Yale university libraries. It is the outgrowth of the Astor and Lenox libraries and the Tilden Trust, merged in 1895 under a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, with the Mayor, Comptroller, and President of the City Council as members *ex officio*. The Reference Department of the New York Public Library has an endowment of about \$40,000,000 and from time to time receives other gifts. It contains over 3,000,000 volumes, including much material not to be found elsewhere. It is staffed by experts and is used by artists, scholars, and research workers from all over the world. The Reference Department has merely contractual relations with the city.

The city, however, is directly responsible for the Circulation Department of the New York Public Library, which assumed control of eleven branches of the New York Free Circulating Library in 1901. The department now operates sixty-five units of service, including regular branches and sub-branches and five special services distributed throughout Manhattan, The Bronx, and Richmond. The Circulation Department of the New York Public Library has a limited endowment of about \$350,000, exclusive of the Donnell Memorial Fund, soon to be used to construct a new administrative library building.

New York's free public libraries received their greatest expansion through gifts from Andrew Carnegie. Nearly half of the library branches in operation in 1948 were housed in sixty-three buildings built between 1902 and 1923 with Carnegie funds. All the boroughs shared the Carnegie beneficence, which up to 1948 had not been matched by city or private contributions, with the result that New York still lagged behind some other American cities. This was due in part to the rapid expansion of the city, the shifting of population, the cessation of construction during the war period, and the lack of adequate financial support.

The Brooklyn Public Library system, second largest in the city, had its beginnings in the Apprentices' Library, established in 1825. The occasion was of special interest because General Lafayette laid the cornerstone during his last visit to America and the ceremony was witnessed by Walt Whitman, aged six, who was embraced by Lafayette and given a good seat from which he viewed the ceremony he later described. The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences was also an outgrowth of the Apprentices' Library.

The Brooklyn Public Library system in its present form dates from 1903. It is a private corporation but has a contract with the city to operate the libraries in the borough, and the board is appointed by the Mayor. The Brooklyn system has property and assets of about \$1,200,000, but it is almost entirely dependent on city funds for the maintenance and operation of its thirty-four branches and three small stations. Agitation for a new central library in Brooklyn began at the time of the consolidation of Greater New York. A splendid site was selected facing Grand Army Plaza and the entrance to Prospect Park, and an imposing

structure was started. A controversy between Mayor Hylan and the architect caused the work to be suspended, and the foundations and parts of the walls stood as an eyesore for a quarter of a century. Finally a beautiful new structure was built with the aid of Federal funds. This was named for Raymond Vail Ingersoll, former Park Commissioner and Borough President, under whose administration in 1939 the Library was constructed.

The Queens Borough Public Library system, like those in Brooklyn and New York, represents a merging of many local libraries, the oldest of which was the Flushing Library, established in 1858. The Queens system has a central library in Jamaica and forty-four branches and sub-branches.

The three library systems have a total of 135 branches and sub-branches in addition to the three central buildings. Some of these branches are highly specialized—as, for example, the Library for the Blind, which circulates annually 54,948 books in Braille and 18,606 so-called Talking Books. The 135th Street Branch, located in the heart of Harlem, has an unusual collection about and by Negroes. The Music Library at the 58th Street Branch is also distinctive. The children of the city are given special consideration by the public libraries and enjoy its rich collection of books and the story hours provided for them.

The Municipal Reference Library, located conveniently in the Municipal Building, Manhattan, is maintained for services to city officials and employees. A unique library, it specializes in the one field of municipal government, is staffed to do research for all city departments on a non-partisan basis, and opens its resources to civic organizations and interested citizens, who use it intensively. The official documents and records of the City of New York, dating from New Amsterdam in 1653 and the Dongan Charter 1686, are made available for use and, kept up to date each day, form an important part of a collection of one hundred thousand volumes.

Many of the branch libraries are in obsolete buildings or rented quarters, and some of the locations are unsuitable. In the aggregate and in book stock, and especially in the matter of staff, the libraries fall far short of meeting the growing needs of the city. In 1946 the City Planning Commission initiated a study of the library situation and, as a result of a report prepared under the direction of Commissioner Lawrence M. Orton, developed a comprehensive long-range program which provides a Master Plan for a city-wide library system. Under this plan every section of the city will be served by library branches, and there will be eleven regional branches in central areas where the demands are greatest. This program was advanced in 1947 and 1948 by inclusion in the capital budgets of sums for some new branches and sites for others. The over-all program calls for forty-one new buildings, including replacements and books, at a total cost of \$15,139,000. The proposed Master Plan shows the locations and districts to be

served, and it is co-ordinated with other major improvements in the city's capital program, including new housing.

The State Department of Education, which is responsible for the standards and efficiency of public libraries as well as public schools, made a survey of libraries in the state in 1945. It recommended the establishment of regional libraries throughout the state; this was in accord with proposals made by the City Planning Commission study in 1944. As a result of a special inquiry the immediate future (1948 or 1949) may provide a program for the extension and enlargement of public library service for the entire state, including the city.

The city is also richly endowed with private libraries, most of which are open to the public on request. J. P. Morgan's collected rare volumes, manuscripts, and first editions for which in 1913 he built a beautiful building on East 36th Street adjoining his home. This building, designed by the architects McKim, Mead & White, together with an annex built by the younger Morgan in 1928, houses the Morgan Library.

The New-York Historical Society, organized in 1804, is the second oldest library in the city. Entirely supported by public-spirited citizens, its collection has increased in size and importance through the years. Its present building at Central Park West at 76th Street, opened in 1908 and recently enlarged, is a repository and exhibit space for its many interesting items and its 400,000 books and precious manuscripts on New York and American history.

The Mercantile Library Association, since 1829 serving the trade and working population, has continued its useful library service for more than a hundred years. Its present collection, located in East 47th street, numbers 250,000 volumes. Cooper Union is said to have the oldest free library in the city. All the colleges of the city have their own libraries, which make possible the instructional programs carried on by these institutions.

The New York Society Library, the oldest institution of this kind in the city, began its existence on Nassau Street in 1793. A subscription library maintained by its members, it has always been primarily a library of selected literature. Because of its age and the fact that it grew with the city, its collection of American letters is important and is extensively used by historically minded New Yorkers. The Russell Sage Foundation Library has perhaps the best collection on social work; this is used by the students of the School for Social Work connected with the Foundation.

The libraries described are representative of many others in the city. Indeed, the possibilities for research in the metropolis are almost unlimited. In addition to the libraries mentioned there are hundreds of small libraries, connected with business firms and professional and business organizations and generally known as special libraries, which supplement the larger reference collections. For extensive research in certain fields, the libraries often serve in conjunction

with the many museums of the city, which also have libraries of their own.

The museums, containing many art treasures, may be enjoyed freely by the public largely because they are generously supported by private endowments and through contributions and membership fees, supplemented by yearly appropriations from the city government. The controlling boards of trustees of the seven large institutions in New York which maintain art or scientific museums have the highest of educational ideals for their museums. New methods of attracting the public to exhibits and ways of educating the youth in the appreciation and enjoyment of art and culture are constantly being adopted.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, now in its seventy-eighth year, still displays its famous collections of architecture, sculpture, paintings, prints, arms and armor, and decorative art in 325,000 square feet of space. A new wing, to house the Whitney collection of American paintings, is planned. The Cloisters, the gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is located in beautiful Fort Tryon Park on Washington Heights. It is operated as a branch of the Metropolitan Museum, is devoted to medieval art, and includes in its collection an outstanding set of Gothic tapestries.

The Museum of Modern Art, established in 1929 under the sponsorship of a group of prominent private collectors and permanently housed in a modern building at 11 West 53rd Street, encourages the study of modern art. Its Film Library, inaugurated in 1935 with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, comprises a collection of motion picture films which mark distinct stages in the development of the cinema.

Brooklyn, long before it became a part of Greater New York, had developed its Institute of Arts and Sciences as a cultural center. In 1895 the Brooklyn Museum was opened and as a unique feature developed its Children's Museum in 1899. The Botanic Garden provides displays enjoyed annually by millions. Staten Island has its own Institute of Arts and Sciences, including a museum of art, science, and local history.

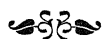
The Museum of the City of New York is a recent development, mostly dependent on private funds for its beginning and for its building at 103rd Street on Fifth Avenue. It devotes its graphic displays to a history of the city and its governmental departments and enjoys an annual appropriation from the city for maintenance.

The natural sciences and their study and development are portrayed in fascinating ways at the American Museum of Natural History. The institution was established seventy-eight years ago, and it is as popular today as it was when it opened. Its expeditions are constantly bringing in new discoveries for exhibition. The Hayden Planetarium, completed in 1935, displays the nocturnal sky by means of highly complicated precision instruments. The Botanical Garden and the Zoological Garden in The Bronx provide pleasure and recreation among

flowers and plants and the wild animals of all continents. The Department of Parks also maintains zoos in Central Park, in Brooklyn, and in Staten Island. The New York Aquarium, loved by children and adults, will soon be replaced by the Oceanarium at Coney Island.

The city's public museums and private art galleries provide a means for continual intercourse with the world of art. New York has become a national clearinghouse and world center of art as well as of educational opportunity, besides serving as the biggest reservoir of the printed word and the center of great libraries. But the city itself is a university, and merely to live in the metropolis is a form of education.

Chapter Thirty-eight



Acquisitiveness Matched by Benevolence

THE manifest acquisitiveness of New York is matched by her benevolence. The city is a great religious community, and complete freedom of worship is attested by its 3,181 churches, representing 114 denominations, with a total membership of 4,245,907. The Hebrew congregation numbers 2,035,000; the Catholic, 1,551,296. Yet the spiritual forces and humanitarianism of the city cannot be measured solely by church membership or by the imposing places of worship. Privately and officially, New York's charities are scaled to the size and diversity of the community, and the sums provided are enormous. The Directory of Social Services lists approximately 2,000 organizations and institutions actively engaged in ministering to the needs of the people.

Although Peter Stuyvesant persecuted the Quakers until he was rebuked by the States-General, New York has always attracted those seeking religious and political freedom. With the exception of Rhode Island under Roger Williams, New York was the most liberal of the thirteen colonies and drew refugees from them as well as from Europe. Lady Deborah Moody and Anne Hutchinson were merely forerunners of the millions who have since sought liberty in New York. Religious conflict was behind the Leisler revolt in 1691, and the Nativist or Know-Nothing movement from 1840 to 1850 was similarly motivated; but worship by all sects was practiced as soon as enough adherents arrived to establish churches, and there has been little conflict between them.

From the days of Queen Anne, who gave Trinity Church some of the most valuable land in Manhattan, the Protestant Episcopal Church has been the richest of the city's denominations, although the Catholic Church now holds more property in Greater New York. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, dominating Morningside Heights, was designed as the largest church in America and the largest of Gothic cathedrals anywhere. St. John's has been growing with the city since it was started in 1892, and it serves the diocese of New York

with its 280 parishes and missions. Near by are the Union Theological Seminary, for the training of Protestant ministers, missionaries, and scholars, and the Jewish Theological Seminary, one of the foremost Jewish educational institutions in the country. The General Theological Seminary (Episcopal) is downtown on Ninth avenue.

The first St. Patrick's Cathedral was founded in 1809 at Mott and Prince streets, north of what is now Chinatown. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1866 and the building still stands. The present Cathedral, on Fifth Avenue facing Rockefeller Center, was started in 1858. This is the seat of the archdiocese of Cardinal Spellman, whose province includes Manhattan, The Bronx, and Richmond in the city and the counties of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester.

It is noteworthy that churches still occupy some of the finest and most valuable sites in the city. Fifth Avenue has many such edifices, and the Riverside Church dominates a long stretch of Riverside Drive. In many parts of Midtown, churches stand serene amid the skyscrapers. Trinity and St. Paul's are still well attended, as are other churches downtown. The Catholics, in 1947, dedicated a new church, Our Lady of Victory, in the heart of the financial district.

Brooklyn, long known as "the City of Churches," is still a great religious center. The Catholics and the Jews now greatly outnumber the Protestants in that borough, but one of the unique religious spectacles held in America is the Brooklyn Anniversary Day parade of Sunday-school pupils from its Protestant churches. Over 100,000 children take part in these festivals, which have been held every June since 1829. The parades have been reviewed by United States Presidents, governors, mayors, and other notables.

New York's churches are no longer mere meeting places for ritual and sermonizing. Most of them, whatever their denomination, strive to make themselves real community centers and engage in all kinds of social and welfare activities. And there has been a drawing together of many denominations in common endeavor. Many philanthropists contribute indiscriminately to churches other than their own. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., made one gift of \$500,000 to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, although he is a Baptist and financed the Riverside Church, where he conducted his famous Bible class. Cardinal Spellman in 1947 made a liberal contribution to the United Jewish Appeal for funds. The work of the Joint Conference of Jews and Christians is outstanding.

Although charity is traditionally the concern of the churches—and they are still active in such work—the broad social services most effective in New York grew out of the settlement houses that developed in overcrowded sections. The beginnings of such work date from about 1885, when Stanton Coit founded the Neighborhood Guild on the Lower East Side. Coit was an assistant to Dr. Felix Adler, founder of the Ethical Culture Society, who with Professor Edwin

R. A. Seligman started the tenement house reform movement by erecting the first new model tenements on Cherry Street and renting them at a lower rate than that of the surrounding housing. The Neighborhood Guild began with a boy's club; later a girl's club was added, then one for smaller boys and girls. The Neighborhood Guild provided the germinating idea, and the University Settlement and Educational Alliance—equally useful on the East Side—provided the training for much of the social service work that has since been done in the city.

New York never lacked humanitarians and other generous persons fully conscious of the need for improving the lot of the poor in the community, to which every year ships were bringing in millions of immigrants who had to live under appalling conditions, but the problem was too great for individuals or any existing agencies. That the government had, or should have had, the primary responsibility for social improvement was an idea that for a long period few except the extreme radicals entertained.

But the city's genius for getting things done was early manifested in this field. The Charity Organization Society, established in 1882, began the task of co-ordinating the social workers, eliminating duplications of effort, and introducing orderly methods in meeting the needs of individuals and groups. The University Settlement brought in numbers of college men and women, who thus became pioneers in the social sciences. By the time of the consolidation in 1898, the New York School of Social Work had been established and professional workers were being developed. Thereafter many problems were treated on a city-wide basis, although voluntary efforts by individuals and groups were increased and the activities of special institutions broadened.

In a report issued on the greater city's fiftieth anniversary the Greater New York Fund traced the growth of private welfare services during the previous half century. Typical of the local charities before the consolidation were the Doe Ye Next Thyng Society, the Kind Word Society, the House for Fallen and Friendless Girls, the Shelter for Respectable Girls, and the Agency for Providing Situations in the Country for Destitute Mothers with Infants or Young Children. Homer Folks, who was a member of Greater New York's first Board of Aldermen and later secretary of the State Charities Aid Association, became the leader of a movement which brought most of the public and private agencies together in the Welfare Council in 1922. The Council further concentrated and unified social welfare work and provided machinery for exchanging information and developing co-ordinated programs.

One outcome of this movement was the consolidation of the various fund-raising appeals. Organized in 1938, the Greater New York Fund brought together 410 health and welfare agencies, merging their fund-raising campaigns and sharing the money contributed. At the time of the consolidation, Greater

New York's total welfare budget was \$42,754,701. By 1948 the Greater New York Fund had a budget of \$104,000,000 and cared for more people than New York's total population of 2,500,000 in 1898. In 1946 the hospitals, convalescent homes, and institutions for the chronically ill treated 1,125,173 patients; the facilities of the neighborhood centers were used by 2,730,300 residents; and foster care, visiting nurse service, family service, and like aids were extended to other thousands. Some large organizations, including the Red Cross, make separate appeals and raise millions of dollars; and smaller groups, of which there are thousands, raise and spend incalculable millions for special welfare projects.

A merger of fifty agencies operating in the field of public health was effected in 1947 when the Health Council of Greater New York was formed to co-ordinate the work being done by such groups as the Neighborhood Health Association. The new organization co-operates with the Department of Health and other public and private agencies, including the City Planning Commission, whose Master Plan of Health Facilities is used as a guide in developing such services.

Meantime, over the years, philanthropy had become more efficient and had attained huge dimensions. When Andrew Carnegie sold his iron business to the United States Steel Corporation, he announced that he was going to avoid the shame of dying rich and then began his stupendous campaign of giving. Libraries were his chief interest, but he also created the Carnegie Corporation of New York and other trust funds in 1905-10 to administer his benevolences. It was John D. Rockefeller, however, who was credited with conceiving the benevolent trust, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., once called the first "scientific Santa Claus," greatly extended and improved on the methods of efficient giving inaugurated by his father.

John D. Rockefeller, Sr., is said to have been influenced in organizing his philanthropies by Frederick Taylor Gates, a young Baptist clergyman. The son of a Baptist preacher, Gates was born in Broome County, New York, and, after preparing for the ministry at the Rochester Theological Seminary and the University of Rochester, became pastor of the Central Church in Minneapolis. In 1888, at the suggestion of George A. Pillsbury, the miller, he resigned his pastorate to conduct a campaign to raise \$50,000,000 for the Pillsbury Academy at Owatonna, Minnesota. Gates was so successful in raising money that he was made secretary of the American Baptist Education Society, and he soon conceived the idea of a great Baptist university in the Middle West.¹

Rockefeller had for years been a donor to Baptist charities, and Gates called on him at the Rockefeller home in New York to ask him to subscribe \$600,000 to the \$1,000,000 fund for the proposed University of Chicago. Rockefeller

¹ John K. Winkler, *Rockefeller, a Portrait in Oils* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1929).

wanted to limit his contribution to \$400,000, but Gates was insistently persuasive. Not only did he get the \$600,000, but Rockefeller later contributed \$40,000,000 to the University after it had been established, and by 1948 it had received additional funds from the Rockefeller fortune. Sir William Osler, who once jokingly suggested that all men be chloroformed at sixty, is said to have inspired Mr. Gates to propose the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, which was established in 1901. Gates also organized the General Education Board, of which he became chairman, as well as the Rockefeller Foundation.

Of the 287 foundations in the country, ninety-three of the largest carry on philanthropic work in New York.² The Milbank Memorial Fund, with capital assets of \$9,000,000, was established in 1905; it devotes its main efforts to improvements in public health, with special emphasis on nutrition and housing. The Russell Sage Foundation, established in 1907, promotes better social and living conditions, with emphasis on city and regional planning. Various members of the Guggenheim family have established foundations. One of the best known, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, with assets of \$20,000,000, grants fellowships to scientists and artists. The Edwin Gould Foundation promotes child welfare; the Commonwealth Fund, with \$42,000,000, founded by Stephen V. Harkness, provides aid for educational, social, and public health services. More recent foundations include the Charles Hayden Foundation (1937), with \$50,000,000, to combat juvenile delinquency; the James Foundation (1941), for general religious and charitable purposes; the Marcus Foundation (1943), for the relief of the poor of all creeds; and the foundation set up in 1940 by the five grandsons of John D. Rockefeller to promote basic services in New York City.

When the Great Depression struck New York, private charity was as helpless to provide relief as in any small town. A special effort through a united private campaign raised some \$18,000,000. The insufficiency of such a sum was soon demonstrated. New York's city administration undertook a relief program in 1931, issuing bonds to pay the cost. But the city itself was facing a financial crisis, and its credit was seriously impaired by the scandals of the Walker regime. Up to the time when F. H. LaGuardia assumed office, on January 1, 1934, relief had been financed by a ten-year loan of \$70,000,000. Of this sum, \$39,000,000 had been spent at the time the money was borrowed, and the balance was exhausted in about seven months.

LaGuardia promptly sought and received authority from the state to finance relief from current revenues. This meant finding a new city tax. Although he had bitterly opposed sales taxes while a member of Congress, LaGuardia imposed a 2 per cent sales tax, a 3 per cent utility tax, and a gross business tax of

² Harrison and Andrews, *American Foundations for Social Welfare* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1946).

1/10 of 1 per cent to meet the city's share of the cost of relief. Meantime the Federal and state governments joined in contributing about 75 per cent of the costs of relief in the city.

An Emergency Relief Bureau was created in 1934 under the Emergency Relief Act of the state; this functioned until December 31, 1937, when it was taken over by the Department of Welfare. The cost of direct and work relief rose from approximately \$213,420,000 in 1934 to \$336,847,000. The city's share rose from \$49,905,000 in 1934 to \$71,694,000 in 1937. More than 2,000,000 persons received relief in that period.

A published summary of the work-relief projects up to 1938 showed the following:

58 large new buildings, including schools, hospitals, courthouses, and health centers.

379 small structures.

1,740 existing buildings rehabilitated

Under the Park Department 287 parks were rehabilitated; the Randall's Island Stadium, eleven swimming pools, 197 playgrounds, two bathing beaches, 1 boardwalk, 108 baseball fields, 25 grandstands, 17 football fields, and 95 basketball courts were constructed, along with 34 athletic fields, 87 wading pools, 364 handball courts, one new golf course, and ten rehabilitated; 211 new tennis courts and 460 courts were resurfaced, 108 miles of fences built, 848,653 trees planted, and 25,328 acres of marsh drained.

Other projects included: 931.54 miles of highways built or reconstructed, 205.4 miles of car tracks removed, and six grade crossings eliminated. The Ward's Island and Brooklyn Sewage Disposal plants were built, and 159.95 miles of sewers built or reconstructed, along with 218 miles of water mains and a pumping station at Coney Island; the Triborough and four small bridges were built and fifty-two old bridges repaired or repainted; the Lincoln Tunnel and the LaGuardia Airport were constructed, three long piers built, and sixty-seven others repaired.

Three public housing projects were built and 2,274 obsolete dwellings demolished. Schools were benefited by the construction of 82 playgrounds, 10 athletic fields, and 350 centers for recreation developed for 1,000,000 people; 104,000 school children were furnished free lunches; 263,873 children received supplementary instruction, and 143,500 adults were enrolled in special classes.

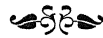
Hospitals and health services were augmented by 4,439 workers, and 952 workers were sent into homes of the aged and sick. An addition of 116 miles was made to the fire alarm system, and 41 miles, with 2,770 posts, were added to the traffic signal system. Rails and equipment were installed in the Independent Subway System. These benefits were augmented in 1939 by projects, at a

cost of \$208,801,000, to provide employment for 175,000 persons. In all, over \$3,000,000,000 was spent in New York City on relief of one kind or another.

During the worst of the depression the Department of Welfare had 453,882 relief cases on its rolls; a single "case" usually meant a family. After 1935 the relief load lightened, and after 1940 there was a further drop of 123,345 cases as the unemployed secured jobs. With the end of the war the number of relief cases again mounted. In addition to \$19,495,600 in the 1947-48 expense budget for charitable institutions, \$30,391,192 was allocated to the Department of Welfare and an additional \$11,500,000 was requested for increased demands during 1948. New York also looks after its own employees. An item of \$62,607,802.38 represents the city's contribution in 1947-48 to the pension systems in which some 100,000 city workers participate by paying half the costs. The city also contributed \$2,000,000 to the Health Insurance Plan organized in 1947; this contribution will increase considerably as the service is extended.

From the record it is clear that both publicly and privately New York City is a charitable place. Not only does it look after its own, but its liberality attracts large numbers of people to the city. They come primarily to better themselves, but they know that if they do not find work they will at least receive food, shelter, and medical care.

Chapter Thirty-nine



Multiplicity, Confined and Disciplined

IN SOME respects New York is as simple as the multiplication table; but here, as elsewhere, proliferation when confined becomes an explosive force that can only be controlled by varied disciplines. The old saying that "the tendency of everything is to become more so" has special application to New York, where concentration and expansion operate like reciprocal engines to provide the city with its dual power of generating and throwing off energy. Signs of this continuous operation are not always apparent. The mass of buildings, the endless movement, and other aspects of the metropolis which reflect this process often seem touched by magic; but there is nothing fantastic about it all.

The Woolworth Building represents controlled multiplicity in a familiar field—one piece of steel joined to another, with tile after tile added, to create one of the tallest and most beautiful buildings in the world. This satisfying achievement was made possible by confining, disciplining, and channeling the nickels and dimes poured into the chain of Woolworth stores.

New York is a mesh of similar chains, with more numerous unjoined links of varying size which nevertheless fit into the repetitive scheme. There are literally hundreds of stories of expansion and multiplication in all fields that differ only in degree from that of Frank W. Woolworth. The first Schrafft's was established at Broadway and 36th Street, in 1898, by Frederick G. Shattuck, to sell candy and ice cream. Childs and scores of other restaurant chains had like beginnings. Cigars, groceries, drugs, shoes, hats—almost everything in popular demand—are obtainable in such chains of outlets, many of which are subsidiaries of producing units.

But the loose links in the heap of trade are even more numerous and are distributed more widely. They constitute the city's basic pattern. Along hundreds of miles of city streets there is little variation in the kinds of activities to be

found in given blocks: Supermarkets, delicatessens, and bake shops; stationery and cigar stores; drug stores, selling almost everything; shoe repair, pressing and cleaning, radio, and other shops—all are spaced and repeated almost endlessly. The process of duplicating, merging, and controlling these little outlets and services continues, while the economics and ethics of Big versus Little Business are debated. Production and management have made even greater strides in organization, but bigness in many lines often extends beyond legitimate controls in the public interest and may also become a liability to both management and investors.

New York's role in industry is unique. Settled before the Industrial Revolution, the city has passed through all the successive stages of industrialism. Practically every kind of industry has been started or developed in New York, but elimination in many fields has kept pace with the continual additions. With the evolution of modern techniques, one industry after another has moved away without diminishing the sum total of the city's activities.

New York is still a great industrial center—the largest in the country—but it is necessary to qualify this statement. There is little or no heavy industry in New York. Many things are made in the city, but in a sense New York produces nothing. It is a processing center. The materials come from outside, and most of the fabrication takes place elsewhere. Even the Navy Yard merely puts ships together; it does not fabricate the parts.

The city's largest single industry is garment making, yet it produces no fabrics. New York's contribution is in styling, cutting, sewing, and selling, which includes advertising of all kinds. The next largest industries are printing and publishing, foods and beverages and light metal working. The waterfronts are lined with plants that receive raw material, which is run from shipholds to seaside factories and emerges as finished products to be distributed to the entire country; but the principal market is in the metropolitan area.

Despite New York's advantages of concentration and proximity to the market, the largest group of workers in the city is engaged in moving people and goods, including the various activities relating to shipping. The biggest smoke stacks along the rivers belong to utilities generating power, much of which is used to move people and goods, on subways, in trains, and in elevators.

By a process of evolution, elimination, concentration, and selection, and through the mobilization of diversified skills, New York—and more especially Manhattan—has outgrown the cruder manifestations of the Industrial Age while developing as the chief financial and managerial center of the country and of the world. The evolution of its relation to American industry and to the mixed economy of a large part of the world is analogous to the evolution that takes place in an expanding industrial plant. Starting with a single building, such factories usually set aside a limited space for offices. As new units are added,

this space is enlarged. Later a building exclusively for office purposes is needed. If the business is a large one, plants may be erected in many places and the general administrative offices located in New York.

It is much in this way that New York has become the administrative and managerial center of organized American industry and business, and in finance and other important fields it serves the entire world in a similar capacity. In addition to production and fabrication, various kinds of services, performed throughout the country and the world, are directed from this center. In this respect New York has long been a capital city, comparable in a way to Washington. It is the capital of private enterprise, as Washington is the capital and center of national public activities. Neither of these capitals has the characteristics of cities where activities commonly associated with industry are concentrated.

All of Manhattan seems crowded and hurried when we are on the surface or in the subways or the busy buildings, but from the Empire State tower the people moving about below, on foot and in vehicles, seem to have plenty of room and are not at all hurried. The panorama is breath-taking, but the coign of vantage is too remote for one to observe the most interesting thing about New York—the fact that it is primarily a triumph of organization. In no other way could such a complex organism exist.

Organization is most successful when it is least apparent. Visitors, bent on seeing New York in a hurry and rushing from one "point of interest" to another, often miss features of the city that are of special significance, and the secret of the vast mechanism escapes them. The vital parts of New York's organizational machinery are as well hidden as the mechanism of a bomber plane. In a sense Manhattan is a gigantic instrument panel, her skyscrapers the control towers for complex operations that circle the globe. Large New York banks are as closely in touch with their agents in all parts of the world as officers on the bridge of a ship are with the engine room. The foreign exchange rooms in these banks suggest a combined automatic telephone exchange and train dispatcher's office. Thousands of enterprises, operating throughout the country and the world, are directed from desks in New York offices.

The city as a whole is an organization, and the countless lesser organizations are meshed and co-ordinated to a superlative degree by unpretentious and unperceived staff work. Government operates at many levels, with the city administration responsible for vital services. Then come the public utilities, which are closely co-ordinated with those of the city, the state and Federal government. The citizens are thus provided with water and sewers, gas and electricity, streets and transportation. Health is protected, safety is assured, education is fostered, and the energies of individuals and groups are released to carry on the manifold activities of the city. Most of the essentials of everyday existence, aside

from those mentioned, are provided by private entrepreneurs, under regulations to assure safety and fair dealing.

Except in really Big Business, labor is better organized in New York than capital. Certainly it is more powerful in many ways. Trade unionism came to the metropolis early and made steady advances. First the Knights of Labor, and later the American Federation of Labor, made New York a union town so far as crafts were concerned. Then came the Congress of International Organizations, which organized the less skilled. Henry George almost captured the mayoralty in 1888 by his appeal to labor, but it was not until 1930 that the American Labor party, originating in New York, again became an important factor politically. Collective bargaining, however, has been responsible for raising wages and the standards of living.

One gets demonstrations of New York's governmental organization by observing the way the police handle vehicles and pedestrians at street corners, the efficiency of the Fire Department, and the operation of the subways. But some eight million people must be fed three times a day; they must be clothed, doctored, nursed, and buried when they die. Their clothes must be laundered, cleaned, and pressed, and they must have entertainment and diversion. These are commonplace matters, but the job of taking care of the ordinary needs of so vast a congress of people is made possible only by organization carried to unparalleled lengths. The slightest disruption of any of these services would create something like chaos not only in New York but also at remote points to which the city's activities extend.

It is not easy to see many of the vital operations which affect so many people. At two o'clock in the morning one may visit the Washington Market area, where the bulk of the fresh fruit and vegetables for the metropolitan district is handled, but this is only the beginning of an operation begun months before on farms and ending with the delivery of the foodstuffs to the tables of the city's millions. Meats and other necessities come to other centers and sub-centers. Feeding New York is a national and international undertaking, and the city reciprocates by clothing a good part of the nation and helping other countries.

These bare essentials merely suggest the magnitude and multiplicity of the routine activities of New York, which differ only in degree from similar activities in every community. New York's more distinctive functions and the special characteristics and unique place of the metropolis in the larger scheme of things cannot be so easily described or explained. One needs a different approach to place the metropolis in the right perspective and to appreciate its continuing drama. All that can be seen from outside is the setting, yet the buildings and physical features of the city help to visualize and explain its more elusive aspects.

Telescopes beside the parapet on the Empire State observation tower permit a more intimate view of Fifth Avenue, just beneath, and one may watch the

flow of controlled traffic as it alternatively moves up and down and east and west as the lights change. There is a gap in the tall buildings where the New York Public Library, with classic restraint, permits the sun to bathe Bryant Park in a mystic effulgence. A flock of pigeons circles and flutters to rest on the Library façade above the lions, and the bus has stopped at 42nd Street—the heart of Midtown. People cross as green lights flash. A small group near the edge of the sidewalk, like an eddy in the human stream, surrounds a man bending over a long dark object. It is a telescope, pointing upward. From 42nd Street the man is looking at the people on top of the Empire State Building. Both are seeing New York, but from different points of view.

A scholar, delving among the records in the Public Library for facts about the city's history, may glance out of the window and see the people and the telescope without breaking his train of thought. Perhaps he is gathering material on the library itself, the Exposition of 1853, the Crystal Palace Fire in 1856, or the old Croton reservoir, which once used the site of Bryant Park. The Reference Department of the library is a storehouse where some of the city's greatest intangible assets are safeguarded and handed on from generation to generation. It is a dateless intelligencer, making cumulative knowledge available through organization. The library itself represents a merging of facilities and treasures acquired through the Astor, Lenox, Tilden, and other fortunes, and these have been organized to produce a bigger and better institution. Both the process and the result are typical of New York, where through organization small units are multiplied and merged to create something larger, more efficient, and more satisfying.

An elderly couple strolling through Bryant Park may be recalling either the peacocks that once strutted in Fleischman's sunken garden at 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue, or the Hippodrome, or the old "El." A visiting architect, builder, or engineer may be curious concerning the spaces between the sidewalks and the huge buildings around Grand Central. He may not know that the buildings and the streets, with the great underground railroad terminal beneath, rest on separate foundations, thus leaving an inch or less between the buildings and the sidewalks. A lawyer may consider it interesting that, in order to legalize leases in the space under the roadway opposite Grand Central, the Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate had to hold formal hearings before they could take from the official map the air space within certain planes between the old roadway of Park Avenue and the ramp above. And a traveler may reflect that in the future, as in the past, he may drop in at the Air Terminal near by and purchase a ticket from New York to New York via Europe and Asia, Africa and Australia, or the Arctic.

The midtown skyscrapers reveal new beauty when seen from the eminence of the world's tallest structure. One gets a better impression of Fifth Avenue

and parts of Madison Avenue than of other thoroughfares; they are more orderly. How many visitors—or native New Yorkers—know that these contributions to order come from the zoning laws and that the great towers and the setbacks (which resemble gigantic steps from the sky to the ground), as well as the absence of overhanging signs and glaring billboards, are the result of restrictions imposed upon the largest buildings under the police power of the city? This is New York's most conspicuous success in her effort to make steel and stone conform to law and order in the public interest. It is not mere chance that Fifth Avenue is free of theaters, billboards, and open refreshment stands. Much of Fifth Avenue's special attractiveness comes from self-imposed disciplines agreed upon by property owners and tenants.

Farther west, in the vicinity of Times Square, there are plenty of billboards and dazzling electric signs, but this is a special zoning district where such displays are legal. It should be seen at night; otherwise it may prove disappointing to strangers. That is one difficulty about seeing New York. No matter how impressive the view from the highest towers, it can not reveal all the city's features. Astronomers have spent years in obtaining accurate knowledge of the surface of the moon, but only a part of this satellite of the earth can be studied at a given time. And so with the metropolis.

Every part of the city and its suburbs changes its aspects from hour to hour. Sounds, smells, and feeling change from morning to noon and from afternoon to night. And every section has a tempo of its own which varies as its activities are altered by the daily routines. While Wall Street and the shopping district are going through the brisk rush hour in the morning, people in Times Square seem drowsy from late exertions of the night before. By the time school is out and the playgrounds are full of children, the exchanges are closing. In a few hours Wall Street is as quiet and still as Trinity Churchyard, and Times Square is choked with eager throngs.

In between these extremes of movement are the more gradual routines which vary hourly from neighborhood to neighborhood. Tens of thousands of children, dogs, cats, whistles, bells, clattering truck wheels, garage doors, rattling windows, grinding car wheels, newsboys, and other animate and inanimate sound producers function at about the same places at about the same time every day—except Sundays and holidays, which have special schedules.

New Yorkers are disciplined to the rapidity and magnitude of change. During the war the city was repeatedly blacked out and relighted almost instantly. When an outbreak of smallpox was threatened in 1947, between five and six million persons were voluntarily vaccinated in a few days. These city dwellers do not possess exceptional attributes, but the conditions under which they live make them adaptable.

New York's streets and subways are crowded, but they would be much more

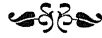
congested but for the special facilities that make ordinary routines effortless. Radio City has twenty-five letter carriers to distribute mail to the various offices; the Equitable and Empire State buildings have eight, and Parkchester has fourteen—this in a town where there are seven postmasters and seven post offices, one of which (in Richmond) serves a thirty-mile rural free delivery route!

Peter Cooper once conceived the idea of harnessing the tides in the North River to compress air that would propel ferryboats back and forth. Today 10,846,000 letters daily are carried by twenty-seven miles of pneumatic tubes operated under the streets. It takes twenty minutes to send mail by tube to Brooklyn via Brooklyn Bridge, four minutes from the main New York Post Office at Eighth Avenue and 33rd Street to Grand Central, and nineteen minutes to Harlem. The streets would be crowded with postmen and mail trucks except for these underground carriers, the existence of which is known to few New Yorkers.

If the Grand Central Terminal, the Lincoln Building, and other great structures had their own heating plants, coal trucks would clutter the streets of Midtown; instead, the heat comes from the New York Steam Company, whose plant on the East River scoops up the coal from barges and sends steam underground to the various buildings. New York's real underworld is a vast congeries of pipes, tubes, wires, conduits, and control stations for all manner of utilities. The blizzard of 1888, which left New York entangled in a mass of telegraph, telephone, and electric wires, brought victory to Mayor Abram S. Hewitt in his efforts to get the service wires underground in Manhattan. Rockefeller Center is the greatest concentration of buildings in the world, but there is little congestion on the surrounding streets, for the reason that all the services and trucks use underground roadways, where they also load and unload. Full credit for such achievements must go to the engineers, but they were made possible by organization and the merging of capital, labor, professional skills, and government, with the co-operation of the public.

Not only is New York eight times larger than other big cities of a million people, but it also has to take care of peak loads and to deal with extremes. Although it had cost the taxpayers of New York \$100,000 to have the plans of the Empire State Building examined by the Department of Housing and Buildings, New York firemen had to climb seventy-eight stories to fight the fire caused when an army plane crashed into the structure and put the elevators out of operation. Firemen must fight fires in skyscrapers and far underground. They must be ready to put out a bonfire or one on a "Normandie" or "Queen Elizabeth." Police must protect children at school crossings, guard an American Legion parade, and be ready for riots or any other emergency. Incidentally, the Police Department's stables are so far from Midtown that the horses have to be transported in and out by truck; nevertheless they look fresh and prance beautifully on parade.

Chapter Forty



The Quintessence of New Yorkism

ONCE upon a time—in the Cambrian period, to be more specific—Manhattan's bedrock of schist was a sedimentary deposit of alien clay and other mineral constituents. Through pressures, infiltrations, and foliation, this amalgam was metamorphosed and recrystallized into its present form and hardness.

The processes by which New York attained social stability are somewhat analogous. By substituting decades for geological epochs the parallel is striking. The continual infiltration of diverse peoples into the basic social structure has had a solidifying rather than a disintegrating effect. Unlike the "melting pot" simile, which assumes that dissimilar elements are reduced to a common mixture, none of the human elements undergoes much change; nor does the dross rise to the top. It is the whole mass that changes as the infiltrations are folded in, stratified, and recrystallized.

Social stratification is repugnant to democratic concepts, and New York has never known class and caste rigidities that exist in other countries and to a lesser extent in some American communities. There is social striation in New York—perhaps more of it than exists anywhere else in the world—but it is not horizontal. Instead of successive layers, with upper and lower crusts, the formations are more nearly perpendicular or variously foliated, like Manhattan schist. In its final analysis, New York's social structure has its base in anonymous unanimity.

Individual indebtedness to the anonymous whole is compounded beyond calculation in New York, where everybody owes everybody, literally and figuratively, and interdependence is interminable. New Yorkers could no more trace the services and goods they receive through nameless persons than they could identify the impulses in an electric light bulb with the coal miner who started the heat units on their way to a Consolidated Edison plant.

The supreme triumph of this complex social organism is that it functions so smoothly people are as unconscious of its operations as they are of breathing. Yet it is just as easily stifled. A strike of tugboat or telephone operators, a failure of electric power, or a stoppage of any essential service is a reminder of the city's dependence on little people grown big through organization. But all the people and their organizations are similarly interrelated. The milkman, until he receipts the weekly bill, is as anonymous as the cow that produces the morning's milk. The larger debt to the anonymous creditor is never paid except by an intricate exchange of services, and attempts to balance accounts are as futile as trying to calculate the number of persons who have lived in New York since 1609.

Yet there is no other place where names mean more, where so many people are so well known, or where obscure individuals can so quickly attain notoriety if not fame. New York's constant crowds confer conspicuousness on those who step out of them. The stage is always set and an audience is assembled for anyone who, willingly or otherwise, is caught in the glare of a spotlight. And how New Yorkers love solitary performers! These are eagerly accepted as surrogates by the millions who subconsciously aspire to imitate them. The Bronx bus driver who, following an impulse, deviated from his route and drove his vehicle to Florida became a popular hero; most of his passengers would have gone with him without much urging.

In the nature of things, urbanites live vicariously. Alexander Black, the author and journalist, once rated human interests in about this order: (1) sex, including romance, motherhood, and love of children; (2) money, or wealth in any form; (3) blood or crime; (4) the Drama-of-One, in which the individual is in conflict with many or with the elements; (5) the Body and health; and (6) the Great Unknown, including religion, life beyond the grave, mystery. All these interests appeal to individuals who seek escape from monotony. For the most part participation in all but routine activities is vicarious. Relatively few New Yorkers visit night clubs, but they read the gossip columns avidly because they feel that some time they too may be players in more glamorous games. When realities fail, symbols are sought. Crowds will stand motionless in the cold for long periods watching a little girl skate in the open rink of Rockefeller Center. It is not mere curiosity that holds them. They are not consciously impressed by the contrast and novelty of seeing a tiny tot performing in a \$100,000,000 setting. Rockefeller Center itself is forgot as the graceful movements of the little skater gives beholders momentary escape from dull routines. Similarly, crowds watching workers dig holes, erect structures, or flap pancakes in a restaurant window subconsciously yearn to use their hands and secure the satisfactions of personal accomplishment.

Democracy is an acquired attribute. Babies and children are not democratic,

and they do not live in democratic homes. No matter how well ordered the household, the ideals of family life differ considerably from those of a democratic community. The members of a family are not equals. The old and the young have, or should have, special status; the parents exercise authority, privileges are variously distributed, and economic dependence is the rule. Nor are fathers and mothers content to raise average children. Fathers are not satisfied with average jobs and wages, and mothers do not shop for hats and clothes that suggest the divinity of the average. It is only when people face the hard realities of life and seek fair chances to advance themselves and the welfare of their families that they submit to democratic disciplines. This process is more involved in New York than in smaller places where there are as many mentors as mores. New Yorkers are therefore more self-disciplined.

The love of order, unlike slowly acquired democratic concepts, is inherent. The antithesis of order is chaos. City people are as fearful of chaos and social disorder as prehistoric savages were of destructive elemental forces. Their fears are well hidden, but they are just beneath the surface. New York has a strong police force, but when it was proposed to turn Governor's Island into an airport there were objections to removing troops from this post, so close to Wall Street's concentration of wealth. The draft riots during the Civil War, when "respectable" residents saw angry mobs emerging from the slums, did as much as anything to arouse the community to the social dangers of slum conditions. Part of the serious concern over Harlem is based on fear, not of Negroes, but of disorder. Harlem's most serious riot in years was not a racial conflict; it was a swiftly spread contagion of lawlessness.

New Yorkers have many fears. Parents are most concerned for the safety of their children; there is danger everywhere—beyond the curb, around the corner, in basements, and on roof tops. The army of "latch-key children," concentrated largely in Harlem but scattered over other areas, are a constant anxiety to working mothers. The virtual extinction of servants and the absence of near-by relatives who might help put a heavy duty on parents—especially mothers. Apartment living, so prevalent in the city, tends to reduce existence to eating and the other bare essentials. Most apartments suffice for sleeping and eating but are ill suited for leisure and for children, old people, adolescents, and the sick. Young men and girls cannot entertain at home. There is no place where the individual of any age can be alone. That is why the city needs more hospitals, libraries, parks, and recreational facilities than other communities. There is little space for books, and there are few places or times when one can read without distraction.

Most New Yorkers are specialists. They may not belong to the large groups of highly trained technicians, but they have special tasks. There is no "common labor" in the old sense. The gang of workers opening a street to lay a new

sewer is made up of specialists. Some of them work the automatic drills to cut the asphalt; others take care of various details; a special scrubwoman cleans the president's desk in an office building.

Specialization is monotonous and stimulates the craving for diversion—any kind of diversion. Multiplied by millions, this demand and efforts to meet it have produced one of New York's chief activities. The opera, the theaters, concerts, movies, and sports—all of Broadway and Coney Island—are logical provisions for this human weakness. But providing diversion for the city's millions and her visitors, also constitutes a great industry. New York has become the leading music center of the world, and Broadway is the house of the drama. The movies were born there, and New York may yet rival Hollywood as a producing center. Such developments do not differ greatly from activities in other fields, but they are based on an apparently unlimited demand.

New York's avidity for diversion is in part a subconscious seeking for compensations otherwise lacking in the city. New York makes more promises than can be met; ambition and aspiration are overstimulated; hopes are deferred and satisfactions denied. This is true of life anywhere, but New York's lure is stronger and the price of success, like everything else, is higher. Perhaps that is why New York produces such extremes and reveals so many anomalies and paradoxes which people from other places find amusing.

Many aspects of life in the big town cannot be rationalized. They recall legends of Abdera, the city in Thrace whose people were regarded as foolish, or plain stupid, by the ancient world. They once elected a mayor who was the best singer in the community. Thereafter they invariably made the leader of the town chorus the mayor, regardless of his other qualifications. One reason for what the dictionary calls abderian laughter lay in the fact that the citizens constructed a wonderful fountain in the town square, only to find that there was no water to operate it. On another occasion the Abderites erected an exquisite statue of Venus on a pedestal so high that it could not be seen. We should not forget, however, that Democritus, who was noted for his city planning as well as for his theory of atoms, was a native of Abdera.

New York is guilty of similar absurdities. It builds marvelous expressways that pour traffic into narrow streets where there are few parking facilities, although every plumber knows that a two-inch pipe will not take the flow from a four-inch pipe. New York has built hundreds of miles of subways, cut through solid rock, without connecting them at many points. One can travel by express from the northern end of The Bronx to Coney Island for five cents, but the only way to ride across narrow Manhattan is by taxi or by a few bus lines ten blocks apart. New Yorkers will stand in line indefinitely to get into a movie or a ball game, but they will risk life and limb to force their way into a subway to save a minute or two.

The favorite god of Abdera was Dionysius, and the festivals in his honor were great occasions. Like the Abderites, New Yorkers are fun-loving and want to have a good time. They have always loved a good show, especially if it is cheap or free, and they are hero worshipers. An Indian definition of Manhattan, or Manahachtanienk, is "the place where we all get drunk."¹ New York has always prized the freedom to drink—never more so than during the prohibition era, when there was more drinking than ever before and bootlegging rivaled the old days when New York was the headquarters for smugglers and pirates.

Most of all, New York seems to like parades. The gridiron street plan made few provisions for parks, but it did set aside plenty of space for parade grounds. The rhythmic beat of drums and marching men stirs men's hearts and also seems to appeal to their love of order. Ever since Peter Stuyvesant marched out of the old fort to surrender to the British the town has loved such flourishes. New York has had some great parades and celebrations. Many of those long past, such as Admiral Dewey's welcome home shortly after the consolidation of the city, are still remembered. The return of the 77th Division after the First World War was not matched after the last war, but despite the congestion almost any special event calls for a parade on Fifth Avenue.

Greater New York's biggest show, the World's Fair of 1939-40, demonstrated that the city had grown up and could stage a vast international exposition without seriously disturbing the routines of the metropolis. And how New York loved the fair! Today it is like an almost forgotten dream, but some of the visions linger in memory. The fair was a failure as judged by New York financial standards, but it was a beautiful failure. Probably more kinds of beauty were concentrated in the World of Tomorrow than had ever before been seen by mortal eyes. Kings and queens and the great of the earth walked amid this beauty. All loved it, and especially the beauty-hungry masses of the metropolis who crowded the area, the children and the aged, the crippled and handicapped—and which of us are not handicapped in some measure?—who were given a taste of the kind of success in life which C. E. Montague has said comes from seeing "the whole of some great thing with the mind, at the instance of some fragment seen with the eye."²

Standing beside the parkway, on the site of the old Corona dump, the temporary assembly of the United Nations now faces the circle where during the fair the Trylon and Perisphere housed Democracy, projecting the One World concept. Tree-lined Constitution mall leads to the former locations of the Washington statue, the symbolic presentation of the Four Freedoms, the Lagoon of Nations, and the Court of Nations. The flags of sixty nations once flew over

¹ Helen W. Henderson, *A Loiterer in New York* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917).

² C. E. Montague, *The Right Place* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1924).

this court; Nazi Germany was not represented, and the grandiose marble Soviet Building, topped by the gigantic figure holding aloft a red star, was not there during the second season.

In 1940 this space was called the American Common and was dedicated "To the people of every nationality, race, and religion who, as citizens of the United States, have united their unique contributions to build a living, ever growing democracy devoted to peace and freedom." There on an open stage a Children's Festival, which included singing and folk dancing by boys and girls representing a great variety of world cultures, was presented. Such simple, stirring spectacles were full of meaning. Except for the setting and trappings, however, equally significant spectacles are presented every day in the schools, parks, and playgrounds and on the streets of New York, which has always been a world city. Into the web of New York life are woven the ideas, ideals, and memories of other places. The boy from the country who was unimpressed by the city until he visited the American Museum of Natural History and saw birds familiar to him at home, is typical. So is Mary Antin's story, *The Promised Land*, in which an old Italian woman was unhappy in her slum basement until she pantingly followed her small grandson to the roof of the tenement and saw the East River and New York Bay, which reminded her of Naples.

Greater New York's celebration of her Golden Anniversary also marks the former trading post's emergence as the World's Capital. New York takes such events in her stride, without undue excitement. Yet the city is capable of mass emotions, of being lifted up en masse by great occasions, and of showing amazing unity of spirit. One of the most striking demonstrations of this unanimity of feeling was the welcome extended to Lindbergh when he returned after flying alone to Paris in the "Spirit of St. Louis." For the entire period of the celebration only one arrest was made in New York. Even criminals seem to have been lifted out of themselves. Here was a supreme Drama-of-One, to which millions thrilled. Few grown New Yorkers have aspired to fly alone to Europe, but they believe in the Cinderella legend. New York is the setting for innumerable variations of Cinderella and Horatio Alger stories come true, which make up the sagas and folklore of the town. The elevator starter who collected \$250,000 in small sums from friends and lost it in the stock market might have become a millionaire.

New York may seem to have an excess of people, buildings, and other things, but Nature herself sets just such an example with her excessive production of flora and fauna to insure continuity and the survival of the fittest. Most important in the process, however, is adaptation to the environment. This is one of the secrets of the city's thriving, and the process is twofold: People are constantly adjusting themselves to one another and also to their continuously changing surroundings. A new kind of freedom emerges from this process, a freedom

unknown in the country or in smaller communities, where people are bound by the slow procession of the seasons and the strictures of nature and there is less change both in people and in their surroundings. There is much routine in New York, but it is flexible. There are wide choices and maximum opportunities among those variables which break monotones and provide stimuli.

That is the real difference between the large city and smaller communities. To New Yorkers, adjusted to the scale and pace of their town, most of the city's wonders are taken as a matter of course. The lasting satisfactions come from the variations, great and small, made possible by the ever changing patterns of existence. One may enjoy greater privacy in New York than almost anywhere on earth; yet most of the city's facilities, private as well as public, may be used and enjoyed by everyone. Inside their apartments, homes, or private offices individuals and families may have all the exclusiveness they desire or can afford. But nearly everything else in the city is dedicated to public use.

Elevators and corridors in buildings are merely continuations of streets and are as freely used, and practically all of New York's outdoors is free. Moving about the city, from home to work, to the theater, library, or park, in and out of all kinds of buildings, and in all sorts of places, one is seldom conscious of where public and private properties begin and end. Most private values depend on public use. Individuals may buy or lease a little space for their exclusive use, but the rest of the city is shared.

Although they are not fully aware of it, the people actually own most of the city. The really big things are owned by little people. Most of New York's three hundred square miles consists of water, streets, and public places. The streets, subways, and other transit lines, the docks and airports, public buildings, parks, city hospitals, schools, colleges, public housing, fire and police stations, water and sewer systems, and hundreds of other facilities belong to the people.

There are large groups of buildings and facilities that are nominally in private ownership and control, but they also represent the savings of multitudes and are dedicated to public uses. No wonder New Yorkers feel that they own their city and are at home almost anywhere, indoors and out. And everyone contributes in one way or another toward making the system work. We may not know what the men or women next to us in the subway do for a living, but, no matter what they do, all derive some mutual benefit from the separate activities of each. A tired-looking woman clinging to a subway strap may not know it, but the bank in which she is putting her weekly savings may hold a mortgage on the office building where she mops floors, thus making her one of its owners. The butcher, baker and candlestick maker not only exchange goods and services but also contribute to and receive benefits from all the rest.

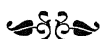
And people in New York get along well together. All kinds of people, going about their business, have somehow learned common decency, good will, and

the spirit of mutual tolerance and consideration. They are orderly and have a code that is quite as effective as written laws in keeping the peace. Police work consists largely in giving traffic directions and in hunting down the relatively few vicious individuals and organized groups in the city, leaving the masses of New York in the main to police themselves. If democracy means a way of life in which the maximum number of persons, of every race and creed, live in close daily contact with a maximum of freedom, then New York is an outstanding example of applied democracy based on mutual interests and self-imposed discipline.

Part Nine: » NEW YORK

AS THE WORLD'S CAPITAL

Chapter Forty-one



The Parliament of Man on the East River

IT WAS logical as well as politic to locate the headquarters of the United Nations in the United States, which emerged from the global war with her strength unimpaired. New York's efforts to make the United Nations representatives comfortable in their temporary quarters were partly responsible for the organization's decision to stay in the city. The selection of a site on the East River in midtown Manhattan was fortuitous in some respects, but not more so than other significant happenings in New York.

When it was decided to establish temporary headquarters in New York, the city exerted itself to provide suitable accommodations. The buildings at Hunter College in The Bronx were made available for the first activities. The initial meetings had been held in a London church that had escaped bombing. Hunter College was more commodious, but it left much to be desired. It was at this stage that the city determined to do all in its power to give the Security Council and Assembly the best possible quarters.

The Mayor appointed a committee, which included Robert Moses, Grover A. Whalen, Winthrop Aldrich, Frederick H. Ecker, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Arthur Sulzberger, Thomas Watson, and Nelson Rockefeller, to represent the city. In co-operation with United Nations officials, this committee made a thorough canvass of existing facilities. There was no time to erect new buildings, but the modern administration building of the Sperry plant just over the city line in Nassau County offered space for the Council and its personnel. To accommodate the larger gatherings of the Assembly, the permanent Recreational Building in Flushing Meadow Park was transformed into an attractive center with a great assembly hall.

The city appropriated \$2,000,000 for this work, which included the restoration of a large area around what had been the City Building and the Trylon and Perisphere during the World's Fair of 1939-40. Although no direct efforts were

made to influence the United Nations, the Citizens Committee contributed \$75,000 and engaged architects to make plans showing the possibilities of developing the Flushing Meadow site as a permanent headquarters. From many points of view Flushing Meadow would make an ideal setting for the world organization. There is plenty of room; it is readily accessible, and, as millions know, the old Fair Grounds can be made into a spot of rare beauty. The most serious objections to the site were that the low land would make the foundations for large buildings excessively costly.

The controversy over a permanent site revealed widely divergent concepts of the needs and functions of the United Nations. One group wanted to build an ideal new capital city on a large, remote site, where architects and planners would have full scope to develop their ideas for a model community. For a time this conception seemed to dominate the minds of the United Nations representatives. This is understandable. City planners the world over are still divided into two general groups. One clings to the classic tradition of grandiose capital cities, with wide boulevards, sweeping vistas, and monumental buildings in parklike surroundings. The other group is all for decentralization—for moving factories and people out of cities into small towns surrounded by greenbelts. So far, city planners have not seriously tackled the more difficult and realistic problem of replanning old cities to make them more livable, while preserving the manifest advantages of centralization.

A wide search was made throughout the country to find a site for such an ideal capital city as that conceived by the perfectionists. Incidentally, some of the most modern, "functional" architects, including Le Corbusier, opposed locating the United Nations in an existing city and were most emphatic in their opposition to a site in New York. The idea of placing the capital buildings in the forest of skyscrapers in Manhattan was to them unthinkable. The storms of protest aroused by certain residents in Westchester over various proposals to locate in that area naturally had its effect on the more sensitive delegates and made many judicious Americans grieve. But none of these proposals was practical. The cost of land and the necessary improvements were prohibitive.

The dramatic story of how the United Nations came to choose the East River site is bound to take its place among the legends and sagas of the city. In December, 1946, the site committee of the United Nations was about ready to report its recommendations to the Assembly. The delegates had been impressed by New York, and earlier misgivings had been overcome. Some of the delegates, fearing that there would be too much confusion in the congested metropolis, had felt that New York paid no attention at all to them.

One by one, other locations were eliminated for one reason or another. The British did not favor New York, but they also opposed San Francisco. The Russians refused to consider any place on the West Coast. Philadelphia had

made an attractive offer of a site, but it was too far from Broadway and too near Washington. By this time most of the delegates wanted to stay in New York if a suitable location could be found. That was the real problem.

The city itself had nothing better to offer than Flushing Meadow, but members of the Mayor's committee were determined to keep the United Nations here. This was the situation on December 10, 1946, when the United Nations Headquarters Committee was to make a decision within twenty-four hours. Nelson Rockefeller had flown up from Mexico on learning of the emergency, and he informed his father of the situation. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was aroused and called a family conference in his office in Rockefeller Center. Nelson and Laurence were there, and they were in touch with David and could reach John D., III, who was in Williamsburg. Winthrop was in Venezuela but could be relied upon to co-operate with his father and brothers.

The Rockefellers agreed to offer a large part of the 1,000-acre family estate on the Hudson near Tarrytown, now divided among them. Apprehending that an even larger area would be needed, Nelson contacted a real estate broker in Ossining and had him line up adjacent property; by evening an additional 1,000 acres had been listed as available.¹

Commissioner Moses and Wallace K. Harrison, one of the architects of Rockefeller Center, had joined the conference. All agreed that the Tarrytown land would be suitable; but certain United Nations officials, impressed by the efficiency of Rockefeller Center and other office buildings in New York, were convinced that such buildings would be far better than monumental structures in a remote area.

It is not clear from the record who first suggested the East River site, but all of those concerned knew that Webb & Knapp, a real estate firm headed by William Zeckendorf, had assembled a large area covered by slaughter houses and other obsolete structures along First Avenue above 42nd Street. Wallace Harrison had made designs for a fantastic "Dream City" to be erected on this site at a cost of \$150,000,000. This grandiose scheme had received a great deal of publicity but had not progressed far beyond the picture stage. However, Harrison told the Rockefellers that he believed this large tract of land in Midtown could be bought for \$8,500,000. Nelson Rockefeller's reaction to this information is said to have been a surprised exclamation: "Why, Pa!"

How John D. Rockefeller, Jr., promptly authorized the purchase of the Dream City land and offered it free to the United Nations, the hurried negotiations with city and other officials to meet certain conditions relating to tax exemption, and the closing of streets and condemnation of parcels needed to round out the site are details most of which were handled by Commissioner

¹ James Monahan, "How the U. N. Found Its Home at Last," *Reader's Digest*, 1947.

Moses. The next day the United Nations Assembly formally accepted "the magnificent and generous offer of Mr. Rockefeller," and the world organization had a permanent site in New York—as Senator Austin said, "thanks to the vision and generosity of one of its truly great sons."

The United Nations site lies between the East River and First Avenue and runs from 42nd to 48th Streets. The site and surrounding area have an interesting history,² most of which is little known by New Yorkers to say nothing of the world at large. From earliest days it was known as Turtle Bay, named for an indentation under the cliffs which has since been largely filled in.

George Holmes and Thomas Hall received a grant from Kieft to what was called the Deutel Bay Farm in 1639. After a year Hall sold out to Holmes. Robert and Mary Long came into possession of the Holmes property on Turtle Bay and in 1749 sold it to Admiral Sir Peter Warren, who died three years later in England. Warren's daughter, Susannah, married Colonel William Skinner, and her daughter married Henry Gage, who owned the farm on Turtle Bay until 1791, when it was sold for \$3,800 to Francis Bayard Winthrop, a merchant with a city house in Wall Street. Winthrop built a large frame house at the high point of the property, at about 41st Street and First avenue. He called the place Prospect Hill, a name that has been perpetuated in Prospect Place in Tudor City.

James Beekman built his house at First avenue near 51st Street in 1760. It was a massive structure of two stories and basement, with gardens extending to the Post Road. One of the parlors, the bedroom in which Major André spent his last night alive and the drawing-room including a mantel saved when the house came down in 1874, are in the New-York Historical Society. The mantel is elaborately carved, and the fireplaces were ornamented with Dutch tiles representing Scriptural subjects. It was in this house that Generals Howe and Clinton made their headquarters during the Revolution. Nathan Hale's trial took place in a greenhouse on the estate and he was executed at a spot close to where First avenue and 45th Street now join. The British military storehouse, within the site, was raided by the Sons of Liberty, led by Marinus Willet in 1775.

The United Nations, after accepting Mr. Rockefeller's gift of a site, designated a ten-man board of internationally distinguished architects, headed by Wallace K. Harrison, one of the architects of Rockefeller Center as well as the planner of the now superseded "Dream City." Meantime Mayor O'Dwyer had appointed a committee, headed by Commissioner Moses, to co-operate with the United Nations board in working out plans relating to developments in and around the site.

Preliminary plans for the future headquarters buildings were announced on

² E. P. Christie, in the *New York Sun*, June 28, 1947.

May 21, 1947, and more fully described in a report to the Assembly in July, 1947. The basic design calls for a 45-story Secretariat building to house the chief activities of the organization. The central unit in the seventeen-acre tract will be the General Assembly Hall, consisting of at least three Council chambers and conference and committee rooms. Other buildings will include lounges, restaurants, recreational facilities, a 600-seat theater, and parking space for two thousand cars. The plans contemplate an ultimate personnel of five thousand. Special features of the plan include an elaborate network of radio, television, and wire facilities for the press, with broadcasting studios and high-speed communications, including pneumatic tubes, between the various floors and buildings. The United Nations has the right to build over Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive and will have access to the waterfront as well as the drive.

The immediate problem of the planning board was to provide as promptly as possible office space to house the activities being conducted at the Sperry plant. For this reason it was proposed to build at first a secondary structure at the south end of the site, this to be followed by the central Assembly Hall, leaving the development of the northern end until later. Meantime a building at 42nd Street which had already been erected for administration purposes by the New York City Housing Authority was taken over by the United Nations for temporary use.

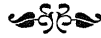
The site itself is an inviolable area. Under an agreement signed by Secretary of State Marshall and Trygve Lie, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Federal, state, and local officials may enter only with the consent of the Secretary General. The tract remains United States territory, but the United Nations can build on it any kind of buildings it requires. Tentatively the plans for the United Nations call for three or four groups of buildings, probably eight in all. Three of these may be from thirty-five to forty-five stories—one at the south end, and two at the north end. But the ultimate cost of such a huge development makes it improbable in the near future. This had become obvious by 1948, when the design board was directed to cut down its plans and to make a more modest start.

Although the development is to be a great international project, it is to be built in New York and must be paid for in dollars. Other nations are unable to get sufficient dollars to pay for food and other American goods needed abroad, to say nothing of raising dollars to put into a world capitol. One solution of the problem of financing the project, as suggested in 1947, was typical of New York methods. This was to have insurance companies and other lending institutions finance the United Nations buildings. They have the money, belonging to policyholders and depositors, whose security depends on peace and stability. The investment would be a good one. It would have the backing of all the nations which belong to the world organization. The money would be spent here, and

the problem of securing dollars would be reduced to meeting interest and amortization payments. Under such a plan New Yorkers would play the leading part in building the first World Capital buildings. President Truman, however, late in 1947 proposed that the United States government advance \$65,000,000, without interest, to finance the buildings.

The first Parliament of Man is thus assured a home on a superb site in the heart of New York, where, in the words of Warren R. Austin, chairman of the United Nations Headquarters Committee, "it is proposed to inscribe, in stone and steel, the achievements of the human race up to this time . . . an appropriate representation of the progress of history and a promise for the future that will be constantly telling mankind that we are working in harmony; that we are maintaining unity. In this way we can contribute toward that great objective to which we aspire—the avoidance of war."

Chapter Forty-two



Unprecedented City Planning Problems

NEW YORKERS naturally are proud of their city's new distinction. But transforming busy, overcrowded New York into a World Capital worthy of the high purposes and hopes represented by the United Nations is a problem in city planning for which there is no precedent. The world has never had a capital. Geneva's experience as the seat of the League of Nations offers little help, and the history of cities planned or replanned as national capitals emphasizes the difficulties.

Athens was a city-state; Rome, Vienna, Berlin, and other famous capitals, built in the classical or imperialistic tradition, were made possible by the arbitrary use of the powers and resources of empires. St. Petersburg, younger than New York, was created on the mud flats of the Neva by fiat of Peter the Great. By a comparable use of national power and resources, ancient Moscow is now being recreated as an impressive capital for Soviet Russia.

Paris is more truly an international capital city than any other, and New York has much to learn from the bold concepts and planning from which Paris, as we know it, emerged. Developed through centuries by the French kings, largely to protect and glorify themselves, Paris was deliberately replanned by Baron Haussmann to serve as the cultural center of Europe as well as the capital of France. He did a wonderful job, but even with royal backing and state aid he ran into financial difficulties and never fully realized his dreams. Neither a Baron Haussmann nor a Commissioner Moses would try to cut grand boulevards or parkways through the maze of midtown Manhattan.

Our own Washington is more exclusively a capital than any modern city, except unfinished Canberra in Australia; but it took a century and a half for the Federal government, with all its resources and power, to advance the Federal City Plan to its present unsatisfactory stage. No one has suggested how New York City, a mere municipality, could pay for the wide boulevards,

parks, and other embellishments which have been proposed to remake congested Manhattan into a capital city along traditional lines.

Although our Federal capital demonstrates the value of basic planning, classic capital city concepts are of little help as guides in replanning midtown Manhattan, where most of the activities now conducted there must remain. However beautiful, Washington is not an efficient city. Restrictions on the height of buildings enhance aesthetic values, but the results are wasteful of time and money. The Empire State Building could house several Federal departments more conveniently than they are now housed in Washington. In spite of the plans of L'Enfant, Burnham, and others, Washington is no better off than other cities in such matters as street traffic, housing, and zoning. Incidentally, decentralizers and those who favored locating the United Nations on a large open tract in a remote area seem oblivious to the fact that our spacious Federal capital and even Los Angeles, which is an extreme example of decentralization, have traffic problems almost as serious as those in New York.

London and New York are comparable metropolitan areas in which varied activities are concentrated, but London became a great city largely because it was the capital of the far-flung British Empire. New York is one of the few great cities in history that is not a national capital. It is not even a state capital. This fact has a direct bearing on many problems facing New York City in her new role as host to the nations. At every turn New York's local government is made painfully aware of the fact that, despite the size, importance, and prestige of the metropolis, it is merely the creature of the State of New York, with a political status that differs but little from that of any other municipality. There is more private and corporate wealth in New York than in any city on earth, yet the city government is feeble in power and poor in resources.

The city's limited powers were revealed when the momentous United Nations site decision was hanging in the balance. Mr. Rockefeller's offer of a site was conditioned upon the city's acquiring certain parcels and turning over parts of several streets within the site. The city willingly agreed, but it was powerless to carry out its contract without special state legislation. New York City cannot give away property without specific permission from Albany! In this case the permission was granted, and the funds involved are relatively small; but the procedure was a reminder that the municipality, with its limited powers, cannot exercise the controls or develop the features that should distinguish it as a capital city.

The city's financial limitations are even more disparate in relation to its new status, responsibilities, and opportunities. It so happened that, simultaneously with her emergence as the World's Capital, New York was confronted with a grave crisis growing out of her inability to finance essential public facili-

ties. The seriousness of this situation was revealed by the difficulties attending the budget making in 1947.

The expense budget for 1947-48, totaling \$1,031,961,754.73, represented the maximum revenue that could be realized under existing taxes. The capital budget for 1948, as proposed by the City Planning Commission, totaled \$244,541,292.58, which was close to the maximum permitted under the debt limit fixed by the state. The inadequacy of this sum in meeting critical needs of the city was stressed in the Commission's report. It meant reducing to an absolute minimum expenditures for hospitals, schools, colleges, health centers, and transit and other vital facilities. Practically no funds were available for rehabilitating the waterfront, for sewage treatment plants, for improvements for local traffic including parking, for transit,¹ or for other badly needed betterments.

New York's government has never been able adequately to meet the pressing needs of the millions who live there. It is easy enough to attribute the city's troubles to waste, extravagance, and corruption, but the most honest and economical of city administrations could not today provide the facilities and services demanded by the New York public. On January 1, 1948, the city had a borrowing margin of less than \$100,000,000 to meet demands for more than \$2,000,000,000 in improvements that were badly needed. Because of the depression and the war there had been a construction lag of at least ten years, during which the city was expanding while obsolescence and deterioration were at work. The tremendous shifts in population were important factors in this situation.

New York's plans for the future were well advanced before anyone imagined that the city was to become the political center of the world. Altogether, New York City had a Post-war improvement program totaling between a billion and a half and two billion dollars, estimated at 1940 costs. The program was based on the assumption that there would be unemployment after the war and that Federal and state aid would be available. Practically every kind of public improvement is represented in the city's program, which has been steadily augmented and integrated since 1942. Actually the program represents the merging and correlation of the numerous plans developed by the various city departments and other agencies to meet the present and future needs of people in all sections of the city.

These and other improvements, described in more detail in previous chapters, indicate that New York has not been remiss in certain kinds of planning. Blueprints already on the shelf would transform larger parts of the city. The plans are on a scale and of a nature in keeping with the community's new significance, but they are far from execution. Rising costs and the city's inability to finance the projects means indefinite postponement unless or until new ways are found

¹ The report on transit-fare increase by Mayor O'Dwyer's Executive Committee on Administration July 1, 1947, includes a discussion of the financial difficulties involved.

to permit the city to meet the normal needs of the people. It is against this background that New York faces the task of making itself into a fitting World Capital.

To meet the emergency, the Planning Commission in 1947 proposed several methods of financing important facilities outside the debt limit. Making the transit system self-sustaining by increasing the fare was proposed as the most effective single action the city itself could take. Other proposals included a bond issue of \$150,000,000, serviced by new taxes, to finance the long-deferred hospital program; the financing of sewage treatment plants by sewer rents or by other means; and the placing of the city's piers on a self-sustaining basis. To finance a minimum school program it was proposed to use funds outside the debt limit to finance schools related to public housing projects, as permitted by law. The Commission also proposed that the state assume financial responsibility for higher education in Greater New York.

On February 24, 1948, Mayor O'Dwyer submitted to Albany requests for the following legislation:

1. To authorize the Board of Transportation to increase the fare on the City's transit system to cover operating costs only.
2. To make permanent various special taxes.
3. To authorize payment by the State of 50 per cent of the City's education costs.
4. To authorize reimbursement by the State of 80 per cent of the City's cost of care of medical indigents and delinquent, neglected and dependent children.
5. To increase the Moore formula from \$6.75 to \$10 per capita.
6. To reimburse the City for 50 per cent of hospital construction costs.
7. To reimburse the City up to \$15,000,000 for United Nations construction costs.
8. To increase the constitutional tax limit on real estate from 2 per cent to 2½ per cent and exclude education costs therefrom.
9. To increase the constitutional debt limit from 10 per cent to 12½ per cent; exempt \$500,000,000 from the debt limit for transit construction purposes; exempt from the debt limit on a proportional basis self-sustaining dock debt and exempt from the debt limit bonds issued for sewage-disposal plants.

The Legislature granted permission to the Board of Transportation, with the Mayor's approval, to raise the subway fare. It also increased certain State contributions to the City. On April 20, the Mayor approved an increase in subway fare to 10¢, and in bus fare to 7¢, effective July 1. Meantime, the City's proposed 1948-1949 Expense Budget was increased.

The immediate requirements of the United Nations do not present serious difficulties to New York. Having acquired a site, the United Nations will determine the structures needed for its various activities, and there will arise

on the East River a unique group of buildings within an area that will have a special status. Otherwise the United Nations headquarters will not differ greatly from many other areas in the city where large groups of buildings house related activities. Nor are there any serious problems growing out of the size or nature of the United Nations operations. New York can readily accommodate them. Housing the personnel was an immediate difficulty, but the few thousand employed by the United Nations can be absorbed as readily and housed as comfortably as millions of New Yorkers with comparable income are housed.

The city spent \$2,000,000 to transform the Park Building in Flushing Meadow for the United Nations Assembly meetings, and plans contemplate spending \$17,000,000 for rounding out the permanent site and making improvements in the area. Without State aid this sum must be raised by assessments levied against real estate. Such assessments are levied on the assumption that the property assessed will receive sufficient benefits to justify the tax. This was the theory on which Haussmann based his extensive improvements in Paris. From the world's greatest center and capital city New York real estate and all business should benefit, but it takes time to realize on such investments. Paris became a great world city largely because it was made so attractive, and Haussmann's planning ultimately paid liberal dividends; but there is a definite limit to the improvements New York can finance in this way.

The city's immediate plans for the area include new connections with Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, the construction of a vehicular tunnel under First Avenue to permit north-south traffic to by-pass the United Nations site, and the widening of First Avenue on the east side and the taking of certain property on the west side beneath Tudor City, which will be landscaped. To provide a better approach to the main entrance of the site, East 47th Street is to be widened one hundred feet from First to Second Avenue. This widened street will be landscaped.

The city's initial plans came in for severe criticism, largely because they were considered wholly inadequate. This criticism was voiced at hearings before the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate. It was argued that a far more comprehensive master plan for the entire area should be developed by the City Planning Commission before limited street changes were made. Actually the City Planning Commission did not prepare the city's plans; they were developed by the special committee named by the Mayor, with Commissioner Moses as co-ordinator directing the work. Whatever the shortcomings of the city's plans, they were practical first steps in providing access to and improving the area around the United Nations site. The only alternative proposals involved costs beyond the resources of the city and the use of powers of condemnation without sufficient control over future developments by private interests.

Many problems of city planning, other than those of finance, were involved

here. As was to be expected, the announcement that the United Nations was to locate in Manhattan greatly stimulated real estate speculation in the vicinity of the site. The surrounding area is badly run down, and the former zoning permitted all kinds of buildings and uses. How to control the redevelopment in the immediate neighborhood is a serious problem.

The only way the city can control private developments is through zoning. The City Planning Commission promptly rezoned the area, eliminating most of the unrestricted districts and giving the main business frontage the zoning status of Fifth Avenue. In the absence of definite knowledge of what uses will ultimately be required, the city was not justified in arbitrarily restricting private property.

Meanwhile, however, demands were made for restricting signs across the river in the industrial section of Queens, since they could be seen from the United Nations site. It is certainly unaesthetic to have mammoth glaring signs that advertise some popular drink blinking at the World Capitol buildings, but the city has no power to stop them. Even in Washington, where the Fine Arts Commission passes on buildings and is supposed to be an arbiter in matters of aesthetics, controls are exercised with extreme caution.

Architecturally Manhattan is a delirium of inanimate anarchy bordering on terrorism. Zoning, which has been largely ineffective, offers no help in curbing lawlessness when it comes to aesthetics. Those who admire the harmonious groupings of buildings and the uniform heights and façades of noble structures in some of the old cities abroad must realize that city planning in America is still a mere gesture so far as it affects the kind of building associated with a capital city. There is no control over the façades and other features of buildings.

With the coming of the United Nations to midtown Manhattan it will be necessary to do some real physical planning there. This will be something new. Midtown, which daily attracts more people than any like area in the world, is not a product of government. Government—local, state, and Federal—has had little to do with it. Aside from mapping the streets in 1811, paving them from time to time, and providing subways, water, fire, and police protection, the city has contributed little to that part of town.

The railroads, vehicular tunnels, and other facilities that make the great concentrations of buildings and activities possible in this area were private enterprises or were provided by other than city funds. There are few public buildings. The city built the Public Library, and Stuff and Guff the bell ringers have foot room at Herald Square; but aside from beautiful Bryant Park, Madison Square, a small area around Rockefeller Center, and a few other slivers of land there are no open spaces where a person may sit down outdoors in the entire midtown section.

Midtown Manhattan's special problems, growing out of the congestion and the

concentration of diverse activities there, have long been apparent. Nevertheless, because in some respects they differ only in degree from those in other parts of the city, they have not been given much special consideration. To be sure, traffic has been so considered, but the approaches toward even this obviously special problem have not been fundamentally different from those employed elsewhere in the Greater City. Since Midtown is unique in so many ways, has acquired a new distinction, and must perform new functions, it is necessary to study the area anew and to recognize that its problems call for exceptional treatment. It is to be a new kind of community, set down in the heart of the largest of commercial cities.

The city's problem is to evolve a comprehensive plan, both for Midtown and for Greater New York, in which the United Nations will become part of a modern integrated community. To visualize the outline of such a plan it is necessary to reorient our thinking about New York, and especially about Manhattan. Over a long period the changes that have taken place in Manhattan have generally followed the subways in the center of the Island, and the trend has been steadily northward. But many shifts have taken place in recent years. Removal of the elevated structures and construction of the Sixth and Eighth Avenue subways have spread activities east and west, but the creation of Rockefeller Center gave new impetus to the northward trend in the center, so that the final gap between 42nd Street and Central Park in the center of the Island has been virtually rebuilt in recent years.

Manhattan's initial development was along the waterfront, where commercial and industrial activities later caused the center of the island to become residential. Improved transportation intensified the commercial development of the center, thus impairing it for residential purposes while leaving the waterfront district blighted. More recent developments have reversed this trend, with the result that Manhattan is being turned inside out. The Miller Highway and the West Side Improvement and other betterments are transforming the West Side. Meanwhile the construction of Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, extensive new housing projects, and institutions have brought even more marked changes on the East Side. However, there are wide belts of obsolete buildings between the river fronts and the central areas that are served by subways.

Locating the United Nations on the East River assures the complete rebuilding and transformation of Manhattan's frontage on the East River from Brooklyn Bridge to the Harlem River and on up to the Hudson. With these developments, Manhattan's general pattern more nearly conforms to that of the earlier concepts, when the gridiron system was conceived as the best method of providing for traffic between the rivers. The primary need now is for better crosstown traffic facilities and for rehabilitation of the center of the island, following plans that

will provide adequately for modern transportation, comfortable living and working conditions, and the amenities demanded of a World Capital.

Redevelopment, both east and west, means that new housing and other structures will accommodate many more people than now live and work in Manhattan. This will produce a great increase in crosstown traffic. One proposal to meet this situation is to extend the existing shuttle under 42nd Street from river to river. By substituting trains with smaller cars, and by having them stop in the middle of long blocks as well as at the main avenues, a large volume of traffic could be accommodated. With the United Nations located on the East Side and with other intensive developments on both sides of the island, such a facility seems absolutely necessary.

In time an underground loop, or diagonal route, could transport passengers to many of the more important centers in Midtown, including the Grand Central Terminal, Times Square, Herald Square, the Pennsylvania Station, the proposed Union Bus Terminal on West 41st Street, Rockefeller Center, and the United Nations. Unlike other subways, an underground service of this kind would be a local, short-haul facility. It could be integrated with parking garages and lots, both in the center of the island and on the periphery, as well as with the regular subways and the railway stations, bus terminals, and vehicular tunnels and bridges. Supplemented by additional crosstown bus lines operating on streets cleared of parked cars, the integrated system would multiply the choices of transportation for people moving about and greatly reduce congestion on existing facilities.

To handle vehicular traffic, it has been proposed that the Lincoln and Queens Midtown tunnels be connected and that entrances and exits be provided by means of a new avenue 125 feet wide between Fifth Avenue and the Avenue of the Americas, extending from 34th Street to 39th Street. In the underground area adjacent to this proposed new avenue it is proposed to construct a union bus terminal and parking facilities for private cars. The proposed crosstown tunnel would also have exits and entrances at Park Avenue.²

Other proposals, made in a special report to the City Planning Commission in 1947, include a widening of Second Avenue and new approaches to the Queensboro Bridge, with garages located at convenient locations throughout Manhattan and Greater New York. This report also proposed a crosstown elevated expressway at 30th Street, in lieu of the suggested underground tunnel connections.

Many proposals have been made for changes in Midtown that would provide attractive approaches to the United Nations site, but some hard realities must be faced. Even if it were financially possible to transform one or more of the

² See minority statement to the City Planning Commission in 1947 by Commissioner Rodgers.

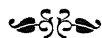
crosstown streets into wide boulevards, the obsolete Third Avenue Elevated railroad would destroy their aesthetic value. The Third Avenue El cannot come down until the Second Avenue subway is constructed. This new subway will cost upwards of \$500,000,000!

The rapid transit problem is one of the most serious confronting the city. A few years ago the policy of extending present subway lines and building new ones seemed questionable, since it merely accelerated shifts from the older sections and made it necessary to provide facilities and services in new areas. The location of the United Nations on the East River and the intensive building along that side of the island will increase demands for the new Second Avenue subway. Relief must also be provided for the Lexington Avenue line, and New York will want to get the old Third Avenue Elevated down as soon as possible, now that more distinguished company is coming.

A committee of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects developed plans for the United Nations area in 1947, and many proposals were advanced by other groups and individuals; but no comprehensive plan had been developed up to that time. The power, resources, and techniques for replanning New York as a World Capital still wait to be merged by popular demand.

New York will continue to do all within its power to facilitate the activities of the United Nations and will contribute to the full extent of its resources to make the city a fitting capital of the world. At the same time, it would seem that the nation and the state, which share in the honor of having the United Nations located here, should make generous contributions toward this end. Before such aid can be expected, however, the city must develop comprehensive plans for the World's Capital City.

Chapter Forty=three



New York's *Salut au Monde*

All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia,
indifferent of place!
All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagoes
of the sea!
And you of centuries hence, when you listen to me!
And you, each and everywhere, whom I specify not
but include just the same!
Health to you! Good will to you all—from me and America
sent.

From *Salut au Monde*, by Walt Whitman

IN A period of universal confusion, when direction is uncertain and goals indefinite, New York faces the future with undiminished confidence. Always a place of new beginnings, unawed by the rapidity or magnitude of change, the old town is ever ready for the new—even for a new kind of world not yet in being.

That New York, where achievement is so often a measure of aspiration, should become mankind's City of Hope seems natural. And it is logical that her dynamic energies and resources should be regarded as essential to the future order and progress of the nations. Yet it is characteristic that such momentous developments should be accepted as a matter of course by those living in the metropolis.

The honor of being chosen as the world's chief city is recognition of a distinction of which many New Yorkers and most Americans seem to be unaware. With all her proud boasts, New York has been modest, or lamentably ignorant, of her influence on the world at large. Like a great dynamo, the city throbs and vibrates with her own whirl of activities, seemingly unconscious of her magnetism or of the far-reaching effects of the power she produces. Many New Yorkers who boast of the city's bigness would be surprised by a partial listing of New York's contributions to modern civilization. Yet strong claims may be made

for recognition of New York as the fountainhead of many forces that have created what we call democracy.

As the greatest city to develop since the Renaissance, New York has become the archetype of modern cities. It may be too early to evaluate her influence on an era, as that of older cities is so often appraised, but what city more completely symbolizes the progress, and lapses, of society since Columbus discovered America? What community, regardless of size, has more closely kept pace with advances in all fields, or is today more typical or representative of the era now supposedly ended?

New York should at least serve as a bench mark or point of reference by which the past may be measured. The sequences in the city's long history are unbroken, and the story of Greater New York takes on special significance at this time. Its consolidation at the turn of the century was definitely related to the emergence of the United States as a world power and was an important factor in the world-wide expansion that followed. After fifty years of uninterrupted and unparalleled development New York has become Capital of the World. No chronicle of any place or period could have a more impressive opening or climax.

It seems a good time to pause and reflect, to strive to get a perspective on the phenomena we call New York. We need a better understanding of why there is such a place; we should try to analyze the factors that help to explain how it developed and its role in the larger scheme of things. Such inquiries should be easier, and more objective, now than at any time in the past.

In a sense New York is no longer in competition with other cities. She has been taken out of the race for such honors and has become supreme, as well as unique, among world communities. Having become the World's Capital City, it would be pointless hereafter to stress New York's size, her magnificent harbor, the height of her buildings, her subways, bridges, tunnels, institutions, and other features so fulsomely proclaimed in the past. New York's superiority in such matters may henceforth be taken for granted. Her special fitnesses have been conceded by all nations, including our own.

New York has never consciously tried to become bigger or better than other cities. In the ordinary sense it has no boosters. The skyscrapers, the great bridges, the subways, and other developments were undertaken in an effort to meet manifest needs. New York requires bigger buildings and other things to take care of her people and their activities. Officially and otherwise, New York at every stage has been too busy trying to serve the people already there to stimulate the growth of population.

The cult of bigness, which is supposed to prevail in New York, is more seeming than real. It is an inordinately big town, abnormally crowded with normal people. They are not homogeneous or even cosmopolitan in the true sense, al-

though they have some of the attributes of both. There are no typical New Yorkers, but many of the attitudes found are typical. New York is really a city crowded with individualists who have learned to co-operate. In many ways New York is man's most successful voluntary collaboration. The war effort of the United Nations represented the greatest concentration of power ever attained, but it was collaboration forced to achieve a definite end. New York is the product of a long and continuing collaboration for indefinite ends.

Collaboration on such a scale has produced some startling results and opens vistas of illimitable possibilities. The United Nations is not yet a world government. Something of the kind may evolve from the modest beginnings made by the world organization. Therein lies New York's great opportunity. A capital city is a symbol. National capitals embody the spirit of nations. A World Capital should embody the spirit of mankind. New York already stands as an embodiment of many of modern civilization's finest manifestations, and it can inspire others. We cannot disregard symbols. The spirit as well as the purposes and functions of an age usually finds expression in architectural and civic forms.

The fact that years ago new patterns and symbols of the modern era were created in Rockefeller Center probably had as much to do with influencing the United Nations to locate in New York as did Mr. Rockefeller's gift of a site. Rockefeller Center, as we know, started as part of a plan to provide New York with a new opera house. The center was not conceived as a symbol or as a project to dwarf other buildings.

"The best building in Rockefeller Center," declared Wallace K. Harrison, "is the big one. Why? Not because we decided to raise the best and biggest building in the world, symbolizing something, but because we decided how deep in from a window an office could be and still be a good place for a person working away from the light. That building grew out of our problems—not out of any philosophical concept. The test of these United Nations buildings will be whether the people in them like to be there."¹

Traffic congestion a few decades ago made it imperative to provide better highways. Robert Moses, who values parks as highly as he does highways, combined roadways and parks and produced modern parkways as beautiful as they are useful. A good part of New York—and the best part—came into existence in much the same way. It is not as though the community, through an exercise of its collective will or under some compulsion, determined to make itself bigger or more grandiose.

Yet things are not left to chance. Things happen in New York because they are made to happen by people who have a direct interest in them. As has fre-

¹ Gertrude Samuels, "What Kind of Capital for the U.N.?" *New York Times Magazine*, April 20, 1947.

quently been demonstrated, almost anything can be done when it is undertaken by the right people at the right time and in the right way.

Written history has not been able to keep pace with New York as she has forged ahead in so many spheres of activity; yet the record, in some detail, has been well kept. To the discerning, every street in New York has monuments, and the dominant characteristics of different periods may readily be traced. All the faults and failures, as well as the triumphs of daring and perseverance, are here; the extremes both good and bad, the scars and debris of intense competition, and the dire effects of a ruthless industrialism on a town laid out for other times and purposes are all too apparent.

But there are also the thrilling towers and vaulting bridges symbolizing the simultaneous upward and outward thrusts of the overcharged old city that erupted like a volcano fifty years ago and spread over an enormous area—the gemlike City Hall and the breathtaking Rockefeller Center; the innumerable subways and tunnels and bridges spewing indigestible volumes of traffic into clogged streets; the new housing and the lingering blight; spacious parks and graceful parkways; the architectural anomalies and bold innovations, defiant demonstrations of inanimate anarchy contrasting sharply with the orderly busyness of well-disciplined people.

Under the Dutch and English, New York was the capital of a rich and important province coveted and fought for by many nations. It was the last capital of the Confederation that won the Revolution and the first capital of the United States. For political reasons, the Federal government was moved to Washington, but New York became and remains the center of the nation's energies, and it has played a dominant role in the development of the country. As headquarters of the United Nations, New York again becomes a capital city, but it will be a new kind of capital.

No one should be seriously disturbed because a large commercial and financial center was selected for this purpose. The choice marks the formal merging of political and economic power. The affinity between these two forces has always been real and close, and New York has been their natural rendezvous. It was not a mere coincidence that the Federal government and the New York Stock Exchange were established almost simultaneously in Wall Street and that the Tammany Society was born just around the corner. The Constitution was "essentially an economic document."² The Tammany Society was started to carry on the fight for popular rights.

What has since happened is an important part of the story of New York, but the old issues and the clash of interests are now world-wide. More recently, the line between politics and economics has been completely obliterated. The new

² Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935).

world order, as represented by the United Nations, is a merging of world-wide economic and political forces. No such merging and concentration of forces has ever before taken place, and the possibilities and implications, the responsibilities and dangers, are beyond comprehension. The only analogy for such tremendous concentrations of power is to be found in the mastery of atomic energy, of which New York has become a closely related counterpart. Nuclear physics can only be described in the language of mathematics. In some way, words must be found to record the corresponding forces and advances in the social sciences.

That is a task for scientists, but New York, as the setting for the great drama just beginning, can be seen and described; its history, while still largely unwritten, can be read in the vast array of its buildings and monuments, and even in the movements and ways of living of the millions who through the years have been drawn to New York as by a powerful magnet.

Many things have happened in New York that have affected the cause of history without seriously altering the city's routines. Few cities anywhere have had less disorder, yet effective governmental controls are exercised by the city in the general interest with minimum restraints on personal freedom. New York's history from the beginning is a continuing account of battles fought and won for freedom at home, in the nation, and for humanity everywhere. It is a stirring part of New York's story and one generally neglected. The United Nations, as they begin their efforts for a better world, will not be embarrassed by the record of their capital city in advancing the Four Freedoms.

Greater New York began with a sordid political scandal, and many others have followed; the pendulum has constantly swung between reform and corruption, but the former has at least balanced the latter, and municipal government has been steadily improved. In the latest surveys of American cities³ New York gets the highest rating in civic righteousness and efficiency. It might be noted, also, that New York has had almost every kind of municipal government except one of radical inclinations. The truth seems to be that politics and municipal government, good and bad, have played a relatively minor role in the development of New York. Credit is due officials for the great public improvements in the city, but with a few notable exceptions the initiative has come from private individuals and groups. New York's public as well as private development is the sum of the dreams and working of innumerable individuals, most of whom are little known.

Nevertheless, New York has never kept up with the demands for vitally needed facilities and services. It has not solved the basic problems of existence. Nowhere are there more glaring contrasts between rich and poor. Life is hard for

³ See *Our Fair City*, edited by Col. Robert S. Allen (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1947), and John Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947).

millions, and living and working conditions are deplorable in many respects. But New York has demonstrated that such problems are not insoluble, that it is within the power of government really to establish the Four Freedoms.

The experience of New York also shows that the present divisions of power and resources, as between government at several levels, do not correspond to the distribution of populations or the needs of great masses of people. The United Nations recognizes that the well-being of peoples everywhere is a matter of concern to all of civilization. No serious attempt has yet been made to translate such universal objectives into practical help, or to make it available where it is most needed. New York is an example of a great city which probably does more for its inhabitants than any municipality but falls far short of meeting the pressing needs of a large part of its population. Along with the rest of humanity, New York is involved in finding ways of making the benefits of better government at all levels available to individuals.

New York thus epitomizes and visualizes the struggles, the failures, and the successes of masses of people everywhere. It attracts and holds millions who come from choice and stay because New York is and always has been a City of Hope. And, despite the city's tragedies, wars, depressions, injustices, and other adversities, its annals constitute a success story that augurs a hopeful new beginning for New York and the world.

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